



Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond
May 8 – 15, 2014

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Aboriginal Arts & Culture

10 quick questions with musician Kristi Lane Sinclair

Plus the exclusive premiere of Sinclair's new music video

By Kim Wheeler, [CBC News](#) Posted: May 09, 2015 10:56 AM ET Last Updated: May 11, 2015 12:38 PM ET

Now in its fifth year, the Red Ride Tour is slated to hit the road on May 13, starting in Vancouver.

The tour welcomes no fewer than 11 different indigenous artists, on 15 stops between Vancouver and Brooklyn, N.Y.

Co-founder Kristi Lane Sinclair describes it as "a mobile village of musicians hell bent on throwing parties and effecting change."

This year the tour is also doubling as support of Sinclair's third album *Dark Matter*. The Haida musician says the new album "sounds like classical guitar and pain went into a psychedelic washing machine."

Sinclair is one busy artist. Between organizing the tour, finishing her album and filming her TV show *Face the Music* — set to launch this fall on APTN — she found the time to answer 10 quick questions for us.

You can find those answers below the CBC Aboriginal exclusive premiere of her music video *Kiki*.

1. Describe the Red Ride Tour in three sentences.

Red Ride Tour is a mobile village of musicians hell bent on throwing parties and effecting change. Red Ride Tour is fuelled by sweat. Red Ride Tour has the best shoes.

2. What does your new album sound like?

Dark Matter sounds like classical guitar and pain went into a psychedelic washing machine.

3. What are you most looking forward to on the tour?

The road forward! But really seeing all my friends. I mean every last one and making new ones.

4. What is the one thing you dread about touring?

Swollen feet! Is that something you say on CBC? But really, any suggestions for travelling feet?

5. What do you absolutely have to take with you when touring?

Derek Miller and dry shampoo.

6. What is something that no one really knows about you but the other musicians on the tour will find out about you?

A phobia of sharp objects.

7. Which book will you take with you to read?

Three Day Road by Joseph Boyden.

8. Driving or the passenger?

Yet to be determined. I've always been the main driver. My wish was to have a Red Ride driver. But nothing comes easy.

9. Vancouver or Toronto?

For now, both!

10. Seafood or fast food?

Beet and ginger juice for these kids. Red Ride Tour's budget includes a portable juicer. Red Ride Tour 4 hit a tragic speed bump when I ate buffet fish in Regina. Lesson learned. Lesson learned.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/10-quick-questions-with-musician-kristi-lane-sinclair-1.3063244>

For Mother's Day, indigenous celebrities share memories of mom

Nathaniel Arcard, JB the First Lady and Massey Whiteknife on what their mothers taught them

By Kim Wheeler, [CBC News](#) Posted: May 09, 2015 4:22 PM ET Last Updated: May 09, 2015 4:22 PM ET



Marcie Arcand plants a big kiss on her son's actor Nathaniel Arcand's cheek. (Crystal Arcand)

Being a mom has been the most important thing I've done in my life. My last child will be graduating high school in June and will most likely move to Vancouver to begin post-secondary education in the fall.

I have great memories of them and I hope they share the same ones with me. I have also imparted a lot of advice to all three of them, whether they wanted it or not.

My one piece of advice that remains consistent to them is treat others how you want to be treated. It doesn't always serve them well, but I like to think I've raised three amazingly empathetic kids.

CBC Aboriginal asked indigenous celebrities to share either their favourite memory of their moms with us or the one piece of advice their mother gave them that they have passed along to their children.

Here's what they said:

[Nathaniel Arcand, actor on CBC's *Heartland*](#)

"I have many favourite memories of my mom, like how she was always there when we really needed her to be.

This one particular time my brother Mike and sister Jess were at the park playing when these big kids came and started picking on and beating up the small kids, like my younger brother Mike.

I went to help my brother out when all these bigger kids started beating me up, too. My sister Jess ran home, which was only a couple blocks away, to get our mom.

Then, out of nowhere: BAM! My mom was knocking these bigger kids around and slapping, kicking, punching them all and chasing them all away.

Our mom saved us and the other little kids that day from bullies at the playground. Don't mess with mom."

Massey Whiteknife (Iceis Rain)



Iceis Rain aka Massey Whiteknife poses with her mom Jean Whiteknife at the 2014 Aboriginal Peoples Choice Music Awards. (Supplied)

"My mom, Jean Whiteknife, is my biggest supporter and survived abuse in the mission.

When I was a child I promised her that one day I'm gonna make it so she will have the life she deserved. My most favourite moment was when she got her passport as she always wanted to travel and I surprised her with a trip to Los Angeles. On Christmas, I took her to Universal Studios and to Vegas.

Spending that time with her, we bonded and we were lucky to spend the evening watching the sunset and she told me she was proud of me and I told her everything I do is for her. Being survivors of abuse, we both have the strength of each other and seeing my mom's smile is worth my life on this earth. Happy Mother's Day, mom."

JB the First Lady, Vancouver hip-hop artist

"My mother is the strongest, most resourceful woman I know. She was a single mother that provided for her two daughters no matter what.

My favourite memory of my mom is that she always made sure that my sister and I would have fruit, sandwiches and a juice box everyday for lunch.

That showed me how much she loved us and she could provide in the roughest times. Now I have a son and [my mother's] relationship with my son is a strong bond."

Ryan Cunningham, artistic director of Native Earth Performing Arts

"When I was eight my mom took me to Hawaii for our vacation and my birthday, which is on May 11 and also falls on Mother's Day often.

Everyone thought I was Hawaiian and my mom took me to a restaurant for my birthday that had a huge aquarium in the middle. We sat right beside the tank and during dinner, a scuba diver swam down with a sign that read 'Happy birthday, Ryan.'

That was an awesome memory. I love you, mom."

Craig Lauzon, actor and comedian of *Royal Canadian Air Farce*

"My mother has never really said 'this is how you should be' or 'this is what you should do' or 'this is how you should act.'

Like many great leaders throughout our time on Mother Earth, she has just done and I have watched.

My mother has always lead by example: Single mother, three kids, living below the poverty line she never asked for anything, from anyone — except from us kids to make her proud.

As a single parent she taught me how to be responsible, she taught me how to be strong, she taught me how to be kind, she taught me how to love, she taught me how to be a man and she taught me how to be a father to my boys.

Aho, I love you, mum."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/for-mother-s-day-indigenous-celebrities-share-memories-of-mom-1.3064878>

Inuit art collection donated to U of S

Almost 100 pieces collected by Sam and Margaret Schwartz now on display at the Edwards School of Business

Reported by **Trelle Kolojay**

First Posted: May 11, 2015 4:40pm

An extensive art collection and passion for Indigenous art started for Sam and Margaret Schwartz with a single whalebone carving the pair bought in Banff in 1969.

"We found as time went by, that the piece spoke to us about Inuit life. It was carved on three sides each depicting a different element of their life. It made us realize that even in a harsh environment, art triumphed in bringing out the inspiration and the understanding of life," Sam said.

When Margaret died in 2010, Sam said he wanted to find a new home for the art collection and immediately thought of the University of Saskatchewan. Sam graduated from the College of Commerce, now the Edwards School of Business, in 1950 and hoped to display all of the pieces at once in a place where many people could enjoy them.

"This led me to think of a living collection, not like a museum, but something that was out in the open, that would encourage people, particularly young people to come," Sam said.

Now, the 87 pieces are the largest donation of Inuit and First Nations art to the university and are displayed inside the Edwards School of Business.

Karla Jessen-Williamson, assistant professor of Educational Foundations at the U of S is the only Inuit professor at the university and is thrilled to see this collection.

"It means the world to me because presence of Inuit is so miniscule here in this university," she said.

Jessen-Williamson said when she walks through the exhibits, she can feel the artists and their creations speaking to her.

"The dreams, the wonderment evoked by the spirits of the land, the spirits of the sky, the spirits of the river, fish, birds, you name it, it's all there."

The collection has taken years to get to its current home after being held up several times because of customs, but now Sam is thrilled to see it in its new home.

"As a memorial to my wife, it is absolutely over the top. It more than satisfies my expectations," Sam said.

Direct Link: <http://ckom.com/story/photos-inuit-art-collection-donated-u-s/554163>

APTN announces performers for Aboriginal Day concert

By [*Jim Bender*](#), *Winnipeg Sun*

First posted: Tuesday, May 12, 2015 01:03 PM CDT | Updated: Tuesday, May 12, 2015 05:33 PM CDT

Rising country star Brett Kissel will headline the ninth annual National Aboriginal Day at The Forks on June 20, APTN announced Tuesday.

Kissel will perform at the annual free concert that will cap off day-long activities at The Forks.

Those activities include the Cultural Stage, which will feature rotating performances throughout the day, the Aboriginal Day competition pow wow and a skateboard competition. The Celebration Village will open at 11 a.m., and will include an APTN Kids Zone for the first time.

Other acts to perform at the free concert, to be held from 7:30 p.m. to about 11:30 p.m., will include Winnipeg's Don Amero teaming up with Kissel, as well as fiddler Patti Kusturok, Federal Lights, Lightning Cloud, marijosee, Mike Bone and sisters Shayne and Taylor May. APTN will broadcast both the concert in Winnipeg and a sister concert in Edmonton that night.

Organizers are expecting about 30,000 visitors to take in the activities that day.

"It's about celebrating the very best of aboriginal people and inviting everyone in to partake and experience what aboriginal culture is all about," APTN CEO Sky Bridges said at The Forks on Tuesday. "Every single year, the audience increases because the dialogue increases.

"Last year, we had 46 million impressions on the hashtag, so everyone's talking while the show is going on. It's absolutely amazing.

"You get a real different sense of what aboriginal culture is. And it's entertaining. It's a high-impact show and it's having a great time. As Canadians, I think we're all about celebrating all cultures and National Aboriginal Day is an important part of Canadian heritage."

The day will finish with fireworks.

Direct Link: <http://www.winnipegsun.com/2015/05/12/aptn-announces-performers-for-aboriginal-day-concert>

Inuit carvings bring spirit to campus atrium

By Cam Fuller, The StarPhoenix May 12, 2015

The number 87 was highly meaningful on Monday at the Edwards School of Business.

U of S alumnus Samuel Schwartz, 87, donated his collection of 87 pieces of Inuit artwork to his alma mater.

"I'm delighted that it's come together," Schwartz said. He was just a kid from Moose Jaw when he enrolled at the University of Saskatchewan in 1945. He graduated with degrees in chemistry and commerce, earned his MBA at Harvard and became an executive with Conoco and DuPont. Retired since 1988, he lives in Naples, Fla.

His collection started thanks to his wife Margaret when they bought a whale bone carving in Banff in 1969. They continued collecting for 40 years.

"She had a keen eye for quality and an unlimited desire to be surrounded by such objects," Schwartz said.

After his wife died, Schwartz realized the collection was too large to give to one of his four children.

But dividing it was not a desirable option. He compared the artwork to having a beautiful 40-year-old daughter unmarried and still living at home.

"My search for a suitor started and ended at the Edwards School of Business," Schwartz told a gathering of students, faculty and dignitaries.

He offered the collection to the university in 2010. It's valued at several hundred thousand dollars.

It was a major undertaking to import it - some pieces are still awaiting their third attempt at crossing the border - and display it properly. The college's glass atrium was renovated with new furniture. Cases and plaques were built and lighting added to display the art properly in winter when snow covers the roof.

"I assure you that this was not an easy logistical feat," said Daphne Taras, dean of the Edwards School of Business.

Her first call after becoming dean was to Schwartz, she said. She followed that up with a visit to his home in Naples while on vacation and kept in touch through the painstaking process.

"I have to say that Sam was a class act throughout," said Taras.

A priority for Schwartz was having the art surround the students rather than being in a museum.

"I hit on the idea of what I call a living collection, one where the collection is shown in a manner that permits people passing by to have a seat, and perhaps spend a moment of relaxation looking at the various pieces." He'd seen photos of the space, but Monday was the first time he'd seen it in person.

"My expectations were fairly high, and they've been considerably exceeded by what I've seen today.

"It is beautiful," Schwartz said.

He was pleased to have done what he called the right thing at the right time.

"I'm very fortunate to still be in good health and to be able to come here and enjoy seeing it in its new home, and knowing that it will be here forever."

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/entertainment/Inuit+carvings+bring+spirit+campus+atrium/11048864/story.html>

Lineup announced for Aboriginal Day Live in Edmonton

By Brent Wittmeier, Edmonton Journal May 13, 2015

Nathan Cunningham might sing with a country twang, but he's been known to play around with hip-hop and R & B.

The Sucker Creek First Nation crooner says genre boundaries aren't rigid back home, about 3½ hours north of Edmonton, on the west side of Lesser Slave Lake. He grew up surrounded by guitar-playing uncles and cousins. It was only a matter of time until he picked one up and experimented too.

Cunningham was on hand at Edmonton City Hall on Wednesday to perform as part of the announcement of the lineup next month at Louise McKinney Park for Aboriginal Day Live, a show hosted by the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) for broadcast nationwide.

It's the first time Alberta will host the event, and for Cunningham, it's a chance to showcase local artists and the unseen creativity in the far-flung corners of the province.

"Winnipeg has always been the media hub (for aboriginal music)," said Cunningham, now based in Grande Prairie. "Alberta has a lot of communities with a lot of undiscovered, untouched talent."

The four-hour concert will include performances by Nashville-based Juno winner Crystal Shawanda, country star George Canyon, blues singer-songwriter Derek Miller, Mackenzie Delta singer Leanne Goose, Calgarian folky foursome Ghostkeeper, pianist Murray Porter and the Northern Cree Singers. In the hours before the show, there will also be music and dance, food and craft vendors.

The Winnipeg-based APTN has been holding celebrations for the past eight years, with a rotating twin stage format. Last year, the second stage was based in Halifax.

"It was time to come to Alberta. With Edmonton last year embracing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, we just really saw this as perfect timing," said Sky Bridges, chief operating officer at APTN.

Bridges says the impetus for the APTN concert series was media coverage of National Aboriginal Day, which was proclaimed in 1996 as every June 21st. The stories told on that day were mostly about social challenges facing Canada's indigenous population.

"We thought, you know what, we need to change the dialogue with Canada," he said. "It's about celebrating the culture and inviting people in to understand what that culture is."

It's a lot harder to break into the music industry these days, Cunningham admits. It's important for aboriginal artists to have a venue to perform in, but it's equally important for kids in Sucker Creek and elsewhere to know there are still places where they could be seen and heard one day too.

It'll also be the chance to show what he and fellow performers can do. For instance, he's mystified that more people haven't heard of Derek Miller, a Grand River, Ont. blues guitarist who closed out the 2010 Olympics.

"Some (aboriginal artists) aren't known in households the way they should be," Cunningham said. "There's people with the talent level of anyone you see on television. They're looking for avenues, for motivation."

Direct Link:

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/Lineup+announced+Aboriginal+Live+Edmonton/11053196/story.html>

Inuit throat singer Tanya Tagaq on her fight for human rights

11:55 14 May 2015

[Alex Bellotti](#)



The Polaris Prize winning musician has courted much controversy, but Alex Bellotti discovers she is just trying to be a voice for her people.

When Tanya Tagaq walked up to accept Canada's prestigious Polaris Prize last year for her groundbreaking album *Animism*, she gained headlines across the continent for uttering two particular words during her acceptance speech: 'F*** PETA'.

Outrage was instant. Here she was, an Inuit throat singer apparently objecting to Greenpeace's campaign against seal hunting since the 1970s – just because her people like to eat them. Within five minutes of talking to the singer however, it becomes clear that she is one of the most peace-affirming, nature-loving artists out there and that those two simple words merely illustrated non-aboriginal people's misunderstanding of Inuit culture as a whole.

"Greenpeace started the seal ban and everyone jumps on this bandwagon without realising that there are groups of very impoverished people trying to feed their children up there," Tagaq explains.

"People don't understand – when you're on your computer berating someone for killing a seal, do you realise how many animals were killed excavating your plot for your house or how many animals were killed and how much of the environment you're destroying using your computer, the plastic on your feet, leather or the McDonalds across the road from you?"

This is just one example of countless Inuit issues Tagaq is trying to raise awareness of. Born to an English father and an Inuk (member of the Inuit people) mother, she was raised in the icy hunting lands of Nunavut, Canada.

She began throat singing at university after her mother sent her tapes of the traditional music, which was banned by colonialist priests and teachers during her school years. Combining it with synth and drum beats that beautifully feed into its naturalistic atmospheres, on Animism she has crystallised a sound that is earthy, intense and movingly political even without the use of words.

“It took me a decade to break into a demographic in Canada,” the 40 year old says. “The problem is that I’m the only one doing what I’m doing. It doesn’t belong in world music because it’s a little too f***ed up, it doesn’t belong in punk, it doesn’t belong in metal, it doesn’t belong in EDM; for a long time I felt like I was just skating around on ice and sticking to my guns artistically and hoping people would eventually catch on that this is awesome.”

Recent success with the Polaris Prize (Canada’s equivalent of the UK’s Mercury Prize) has elevated the mother of two to new levels of fame and this Tuesday, she will be making her first UK appearance since accepting the award when she comes to the Village Underground.

Each of her live shows is in its own way unique – both the instrumentals and her throat singing are improvised around each song, and Tagaq says this makes for an intimate connection with every audience.

“I like putting a phone ban on the room and saying, ‘I want us to experience this together as a reality, as a true moment of us being alive and having blood in our bodies, our hearts pumping and our ears working,’” she adds. “This is for us greedy people in this room and it doesn’t belong to anyone else and no one else is allowed to feel what we’re feeling right now.”

Often the performances come with a message: lost within the ‘F*** PETA’ controversy was a scrolling screen behind Tagaq listing the names of 1200 Inuit women currently missing in Canada. Through the success of her music, she is hoping her voice can “reach across the ocean” and make the wider world, as well as her home country, aware of the problems of poverty and disenfranchisement which still plague her ancient culture.

“I know these are very lofty dreams, but you know what, I’m not musically trained and I’m just a little girl from Nunavut so if I can get this far, let’s see how far we can take it and see if we can get people to open their eyes to culture, awareness, modernity, women’s rights, indigenous rights and human rights.”

Tanya Tagaz plays the Village Underground on Tuesday. Visit villageunderground.co.uk for details

Direct Link:

http://www.hackneygazette.co.uk/entertainment/music/inuit_throat_singer_tanya_tagaq_on_her_fight_for_human_rights_1_4073295

Red Ride Tour showcases diversity of aboriginal music

By Stephanie McKay, The Starphoenix May 14, 2015



Kristi Lane Sinclair performs as part of the Red Ride Tour Wednesday at Vangelis Tavern.

Kristi Lane Sinclair lives in Vancouver so it's no surprise that she often writes about the sea. But when she went to Greece during the summer of 2014 to do some songwriting, one of her favourite things turned on her. On a ferry between islands, the 70 or so passengers all ended up vomiting.

"I was pretty sure I was going to die. It was the roughest ferry ever," she said. "I could just see my friend Cris Derksen at my funeral being like 'This is how she would want to go, she would want to be buried at sea.' But actually I would have gone down in a big vomit bag and I really didn't want that to happen."

It was a painful experience, but when Sinclair woke up the next day on a beautiful Greek island she finally started to write.

Those songs, and more, appear on Sinclair's third album *Dark Matter*, which came out this week. The album is full of smoky, rich songs that draw on grunge, folk and classical. The string arrangements add warmth, while the guitar provides a little edge.

It's an especially busy time for Sinclair. In addition to releasing *Dark Matter*, she's about to embark on the fifth season of the Red Ride Tour, a travelling concert series she helped found. The aim of the tour is to showcase the diversity of the aboriginal music community. The musicians that have played on the Red Ride Tour have ranged from traditional to hip hop to grunge to classical.

The tour started in 2011 with Sinclair, who is Haida and Cree, and cellist Derksen crammed into a little red hatchback. They decided to do it again the next year. People started to ask if they were coming back for a third and a fourth tour.

"We're still a pretty compact unit but it keeps getting bigger. With every tour my car gets bigger," Sinclair said.

The Saskatoon date features Juno winner Derek Miller (who produced *Dark Matter*) and local performer The Northwest Kid. It's the third time the Red Ride Tour has come to the city. There almost wasn't a second.

When Sinclair and Derksen played Saskatoon in 2011 they almost cancelled the show. Then a single person showed up. She just so happened to be Andrea Menard, an artist both women look up to.

"It was the worst moment ever," said Sinclair. You could count the audience members on one hand by the time they took the stage. It was an awkward performance, Sinclair admits. Nervous it would happen again, the Red Ride Tour bypassed Saskatoon for two years before returning in 2014. Thankfully the second show received a great response.

"Saskatoon rules," Sinclair said. As if a new album and tour weren't enough, Sinclair's also in the midst of filming *Face the Music*, a six-part documentary series with APTN. The show will chronicle Sinclair's experience making *Dark Matter*. The show will give people access to parts of the musical process they don't normally get to see. Plus, viewers will be exposed to a different side of Sinclair's personality. Though she's known for dark and brooding songs, she hopes people will realize she's funny too. If her phone banter is any indication, viewers are in for some laughs.

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/entertainment/Ride+Tour+showcases+diversity+aboriginal+music/11054554/story.html>

Bringing the noise to Prince Albert

[Myles Fish](#)

Published on May 14, 2015



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Kristi Lane Sinclair is bringing her Red Ride Tour to Prince Albert for the first time on May 19. She, along with Juno-award winning artist Derek Miller will play the Indian Metis Friendship Centre that night.

Tour featuring aboriginal music talent promises good, hard rock in P.A.

Kristi Lane Sinclair and Derek Miller promise to bring the noise to the Indian Métis Friendship Centre on May 19.

“We’re not going to be easy on the Friendship Centre. It’s going to be loud, it’s going to be a rock show and it’s going to be super fun,” says Sinclair.

“We’ll only be limited in our horsepower by the PA systems, which is probably a good thing!” offers Miller.

The two rockers are making a first trip to Prince Albert as part of the Red Ride Tour, a cross-North America jaunt showcasing aboriginal music talent. Sinclair, a Haida/Cree

singer-songwriter based in Vancouver, started the tour with Cris Derksen four years ago and it has grown each year.

This year, the tour will feature 16 Canadian stops from Vancouver to Montreal before shows in New York City and all the way back in the Pacific Northwest. Along the way, a variety of indigenous musicians of different styles will join up for one or two shows.

“The aboriginal music community is pretty close-knit, especially with awards shows and things like that. So we kind of all know each other and we’re always here to support emerging artists. I’ve booked people who have never even played a show before. We’re open to giving a platform to emerging artists as well as established artists,” says Sinclair.

Sinclair herself has been labelled a “classical grunge” musician, owing to her youthful love of grunge and her post-secondary studying of classical guitar.

“It all went in the washing machine and that’s kind of what came out – it was classical, it was grunge,” she explains.

Many of the tour’s stops are in pubs and bars, with a few in places like P.A.’s Friendship Centre. Some of the shows are pegged to be acoustic, but for the most part, the plan is to rock out.

Listening to Sinclair’s new solo album *Dark Matter* (produced by Miller) and Miller’s recent work, it’s hard to square what you’re hearing with their bios. Sinclair has twice been nominated for a Canadian Folk Music Award, while Miller toured with Buffy St. Marie in the 90s, and has won awards in blues categories along with his two Juno Awards.

But rockers indeed are who they are. Miller calls himself a roots-oriented musician with a new inclination to try out electronic sounds.

“We’re doing electronic music and trying to find different ways to experiment with technology and move forward with the art form and not being subjected to just bass drum and guitar sounds,” says Miller. “I’m enjoying changing my guitar to have not one arrow in the quiver but a million of them, because there are so many sounds I can get with the synthesizers now.”

With aboriginal acts like A Tribe Called Red and Tanya Tagaq having made “being Indian cool,” Sinclair says it’s an awesome time to be making music. Her main goal in starting the tour was to showcase the diverse indigenous talent in Canada.

“It’s basically to show that aboriginal music is alive and well and rockin’,” she says.

The tour kicks off Wednesday in Vancouver. Tickets for the Prince Albert show are \$20.

For more info, visit redridetour.com.

Native Music Icons

You may know Buffy Sainte-Marie as an aboriginal music icon, but how about Jimi Hendrix or Robbie Robertson?

In his latest project, Miller explored the work of indigenous artists from the past and discovered that it's basically "a blueprint of American rock and roll."

The resulting album is Rumble: A Tribute to Native Music Icons, which was produced in conjunction with the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian.

"The indigenous influence has not been very well documented over the years and that's part of my job too, to bring that to light and show people that there's a long history of indigenous music that has been contributing to the progression of modern music," says Miller.

Himself a Mohawk from Quebec, Miller says colonization generally bred ignorance and a lack of recognition for the indigenous aspect of mainstream musicians.

"It's the inferiority complex that's placed upon you, even coming up through the Junos and as a musician in Canada, it always felt like I was a second-class citizen or an afterthought or something," he says.

While Sinclair supports such efforts to highlight aboriginal talent and influences, she also notes that the goal is to have aboriginal music and musicians fit seamlessly into the mainstream Canadian scene.

"I'd like to see (where) there's no stigma, like 'Oh, they're aboriginal musicians, it sounds a certain way.'"

Direct Link: <http://www.paherald.sk.ca/Living/2015-05-14/article-4146862/Bringing-the-noise-to-Prince-Albert/1>

Aboriginal Business & Finance

For aboriginal peoples, entrepreneurship is the path to economic independence

RAVEN SMITH

Contributed to The Globe and Mail

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Raven Smith is an entrepreneur, growth strategist, and start-up advisor currently living in Boston. She is a member of the Carcross-Tagish First Nation in the Yukon Territory.

My First Nation, located in the Yukon Territory, has a long history of entrepreneurship: long before the Klondike Gold Rush, the Chilkoot pass was our historic trading route with the coastal Tlingit people. In recent years, I've watched my home community of [Carcross emerge as a growing tourist destination](#), infusing energy in our community and seeding a thriving local economy.

I now live in Boston amid its thriving start-up culture. In the collision of my worlds I see a future in which aboriginal communities are increasingly achieving economic self-sufficiency. Young aboriginal entrepreneurs and investors are driving this change. They understand that business and entrepreneurship provide our path to economic independence.

At the root of the urban aboriginal renaissance is the desire to simultaneously contribute to the rich fabric of our cities while strengthening our connections to traditional culture. This renaissance is also reflected in aboriginal peoples increasing and proud presence in private enterprise.

The statistics underscore this emerging story. The Business Development Bank of Canada reports that there are more than [27,000 Aboriginal entrepreneurs in Canada](#), 30 per cent more than the 1996-2001 period. TD Bank says that [aboriginal small business is growing at a rate that is six times faster](#) than in the non-aboriginal market and that aboriginal entrepreneurs tend to be about 10 years younger than non-aboriginal entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurship is about developing innovative solutions to peoples' problems. A critical first step is to understand the particular problem facing consumers or a business. Aboriginal peoples, on and off reserve, have a unique perspective that can serve as a powerful source of innovation. Success in business is not at odds with aboriginal identity. Rather, entrepreneurship is a powerful vehicle for celebrating our identity, and sharing it with the world.

Take Lisa Charleyboy, who in 2013 launched [Urban Native Magazine](#), an online lifestyle magazine. Ms. Charleyboy's magazine focuses on the lifestyle of young, modern, yet culturally connected aboriginal peoples. Not only is Ms. Charleyboy herself an example of how rising native entrepreneurs are re-shaping their industries and cities, her magazine exhibits how urban aboriginal peoples are blending their new urban environments with a renewed focus on native culture.

Or take Sean McCormick, founder and CEO of Manitobah Mukluks (headquartered in Winnipeg), which was recently named [Canada's fastest growing footwear company by PROFIT 500's list](#). Mr. McCormick sums up his aims: "I dream of a day when we're not

a business helping a community; but rather, a community helping ourselves...we will continue to build the dream of building a vibrant, global brand that Aboriginal people can feel proud of – and be part of.”

These aboriginal entrepreneurs are motivated by more than profit. They have a desire to contribute to their communities. Sociologist Rochelle Côté has [studied urban aboriginal entrepreneurship](#) and found that “many entrepreneurs saw the ability to support their communities – whether through reserve-based development projects, mentorship programs or scholarships – as a fundamental element of their approach to business.”

What does this mean for Canada? [The Centre for the Study of Living Standards Report in 2009](#) says that an increase in aboriginal Canadians’ level of education by 2026 to the level of non-aboriginal Canadians in 2001 would yield a cumulative \$179-billion in GDP. Fostering aboriginal entrepreneurship is an important step towards economic independence. It will also enrich aboriginal communities and Canada.

This is exemplified by [Skwachàys Lodge in Vancouver, Canada’s first Aboriginal boutique hotel](#) and a unique social enterprise that channels its profits to support indigenous artists in-residence. The hotel also runs a fair trade gallery showcasing the work of Native artists.

We need more Lisas and Seans. We need more social enterprises like Skwachàys. We need more support and mentorship for Native youth so that they can find their voice in the workplace and see entrepreneurship as a viable option. We need more opportunities for the young and growing aboriginal population to connect to each other. And we need networks for funding and mentorship that infuse Canadian businesses with the richness of native culture.

Fostering aboriginal entrepreneurship is the key to achieving economic independence in our communities. It’s as an important vehicle not only for personal fulfillment, but also for uplifting our communities and strengthening our culture.

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-debate/for-aboriginals-entrepreneurship-is-the-path-to-economic-independence/article24327664/>

How B-schools are creating opportunities for the disadvantaged

SHANNON MONEO

Special to The Globe and Mail

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A business class with students from a mix of economic and racial backgrounds almost guarantees that wide-ranging ideas will emerge. But ensuring that future business professionals represent all segments of the population carries a hefty price tag.

According to Statistics Canada, the most expensive graduate level programs in 2014-15 remained the executive MBA, with average tuition fees of almost \$40,000, with the regular MBA at \$27,173, both surpassing tuition for dentistry, medicine or law.

So, how are Canadian university business faculties accommodating students with high aims who don't have deep pockets?

Greg Fleet, assistant dean at the University of New Brunswick's faculty of business in Saint John, agrees that business schools need to step up efforts to ensure that a cross-section of students are being groomed as future chief executive officers and policy makers.

"It's an interesting question. How do we go about it?" asks Dr. Fleet.

UNB staff have been visiting local high schools to recruit students for the business faculty. One advantage, Dr. Fleet has noted, is that high-school counsellors know their students' backgrounds and needs, and are keen to find ways to get disadvantaged students into university.

The UNB's business school has 25 faculty who teach roughly 500 undergrads and another 100 students in its MBA program. The smaller size means that professors get to know students and, like the local high schools, can identify and support underprivileged students.

"The other reality for our school, Saint John is a working class town," Dr. Fleet says. So, within the catchment area, there's a greater degree of lower-income households than other regions. Students from upper- and middle-class families often leave Saint John to study elsewhere, "because they can," Dr. Fleet says.

About 50 per cent of the school's first-year students are in the first generation of their family to attend university. "An amazing number compared to other parts of Canada, I'm sure," Dr. Fleet says.

At Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, about 37 per cent of the 400 undergraduate students are first generation learners, says David Richards, assistant dean in the faculty of business administration.

To support first-generation, recent immigrant, as well as aboriginal students, the Thunder Bay university focuses on support services, such as an access program and supplementary math/business-writing classes for business students.

As well, first- and second-year business classes don't exceed 60 students. "It's very easy in smaller classes to identify students who are falling behind. We bring them up to standards," says Bahram Dadgostar, dean of Lakehead's business administration faculty. "We are known as a value-added university where we accommodate students."

At Vancouver Island University in Nanaimo, B.C., the president believes that it's crucial that classrooms represent society as a whole.

"Our population is made up of diverse groups so it's extremely important that all segments are given the chance to succeed," says Ralph Nilson.

VIU prides itself on the support it offers to disadvantaged students who are serious about their studies.

"We work hard externally to find ways and means so that everybody can come to school. We just don't service the elite," Dr. Nilson says.

VIU remains B.C.'s leading school for waiving tuition for adult students no longer in provincial foster care. For 2015, 43 of about 17,000 students got free tuition; five of those 43 students are in business programs, which have 1,385 students in the faculty of management, 660 in the bachelor of business program and 295 in the MBA program, Dr. Nilson says.

VIU has also formed a partnership with the University of British Columbia's Sauder School of Business to offer the Ch'Nook program, which since 2002 has worked to increase First Nations' participation in postsecondary business studies.

In 2008, Sherry McCarthy became a VIU student, when she started the adult basic education program, which in 2008 became a free course in British Columbia.

Prior to that, Ms. McCarthy, 38, a member of the Mowachaht/Muchalaht band and the mother of three daughters, was a care-aid worker for seven years, sometimes holding three gruelling jobs at once. But, she couldn't make ends meet so she left Vancouver and returned to her home town of Nanaimo to attend VIU where First Nations students are strongly supported.

"My number one goal is to break the cycle of poverty," Ms. McCarthy said. "VIU is a good school with much more reasonable tuition fees than expensive places like UBC or SFU, where you don't get better education for the extra money it costs to attend and live."

By 2013, Ms. McCarthy had earned a bachelor of business administration degree. She was also the indigenous student representative.

In 2014, she started the MBA program at VIU, the same year being appointed to VIU's board of governors as well as being chairperson of VIU's Students' Union and vice-president of the Nanaimo Aboriginal Centre.

"I took the MBA program specifically because I want to employ the business knowledge in helping better manage First Nations' operations and agencies, and to help articulate that it is a lack of self-government and improper funding that is holding back First Nations people in B.C., rather than the nonsense stereotypes you hear all too often from right-wing politicians," Ms. McCarthy said.

She plans to finish her degree in December.

"Politicians are fond of saying people should pull themselves up by their own bootstraps. In that analogy, education is the boots. The analogy assumes you already have the boots."

Now, seven years into her business career, Ms. McCarthy has funded her boots with grants and student loans, today owing about \$50,000.

As a First Nations' student, she also qualifies for funding from the postsecondary student support program, but resources are so limited that students who qualify for funding are often passed over.

At the University of Regina, the Hill School of Business had 34 First Nations students in 2014 and 37 in 2015. And the business program at Regina's First Nations University has 69 First Nations students for 2015.

"When you look in our classes, you see the diverse makeup, that the students come from many walks of life, and you see how it creates a richer dialogue," says Andrew Gaudes, dean of the faculty of business administration at the University of Regina.

A point of pride is the business school's co-op program, where 230 of the faculty's students spend three terms working. In 2013, 837 University of Regina students earned \$9.7-million during work terms, which works out to about \$11,600 a student.

As well, the Hill School of Business hands out 63 academic, merit or needs-based awards each year. "There are lots of opportunities to find a niche, respecting your background," Dr. Gaudes says of Hill's 1,450 undergrad students and 250 graduate students.

All universities have scholarship and bursary programs which vary widely in available funding. High-profile schools such as Queen's University or McGill University have robust war chests thanks to rich endowments and dedicated fundraising.

Award money is usually handled by the university's admission office and is governed by the broader institutional practices, says Deanne Saunders, director of academic services at the University of Toronto's Rotman Commerce.

“The University of Toronto has policies ensuring access to study in terms of financial resources,” says Ms. Saunders.

At Rotman alone, there are scholarships for lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgendered students, women in business as well as other speciality areas.

The University of Toronto is unique among Canadian universities, in that it assures financial support for students. Of the 2,200 students in Rotman’s four-year bachelor of commerce program, Ms. Saunders couldn’t confirm whether First Nations students were participating because students have to self-report and the data is not tracked at the divisional level.

Another Ontario university, Lakehead, was able to confirm that almost 7 per cent of its undergrad business students are First Nations.

VIU has about 2,200 First Nations students, with 17 studying business. “We’re seeing very strong outcomes from the students,” Dr. Nilson says. “We’ve got programs for the best and brightest. Our school is the antithesis of wealthy students.”

Despite efforts to accommodate all students, and demonstrated by Ms. McCarthy’s experience, concerns about student debt, and pleas for lower or even free tuition, never disappear.

Canadian full-time students in undergraduate programs paid about 3.3 per cent more in tuition fees for the 2014-15 academic year than the previous year. On average, undergraduate students paid \$5,959 in tuition fees in 2014-15 compared with \$5,767 a year earlier, says Statistics Canada.

Meanwhile German universities have been tuition-free since October of 2014. Even foreign students don’t pay tuition. The country of 82.7 million people scrapped tuition so that young people who don’t come from an academic family get a chance at higher education.

Iceland, Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Norway provide free higher education, too.

In France, public universities have low tuition fees while elite institutions determine student tuition based on parents’ incomes. Children of unemployed parents can study free.

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/careers/business-education/how-b-schools-create-opportunities-for-the-disadvantaged/article24375746/>

Don Cayo: First Nations aiding development

Think-tank report: Players in partnerships between bands and businesses note establishing relationships is key to success

By Don Cayo, Vancouver Sun May 14, 2015

Resource development in B.C. isn't stalled, as many appear to fear, but rather is proceeding at a historic pace, according to a new report from Resource Works, a business funded, Vancouver-based think-tank that focuses on economic and environmental issues.

And, far from impeding development, First Nations are playing increasingly important roles in moving it forward, the report argues.

If the optimistic tone of the report is unusual, so is its structure. It is long on anecdotes and short on data, with its 21 pages brightened by nearly three dozen mostly upbeat quotes in large, coloured type, and nary a table or graph.

Unlike most think-tank reports that are based on number crunching, this one is derived from interviews with key players in various partnerships between First Nations and industry - people like Lana Eagle of the Industry Council for Aboriginal Business, and Garry Merkel, president of the Tahltan Development Corp. from the First Nations side of the table; former mines minister Blair Lekstrom and former forestry minister Roger Harris, who both used to represent the province on these issues; and Bruce Falstead of Fortis BC and Sally Thorpe of BC Hydro from the business community.

But, although the anecdotes were no doubt cherry-picked to bolster arguments being advanced, they are both interesting and instructive.

Key conclusions flowing from the examples in the report include:

Go slow and build long-term relationships with First Nations, don't just try to conclude quick deals. How resources are developed is a technical question, Huu-ay-aht councillor John Jack is quoted as saying. But, "Why and whether it gets done is a question of will and communication and relationship building."

Establish meaningful partnerships with First Nations. "A number of years ago, some companies engaged with First Nations because the courts said you had to," said Lekstrom, who now works with both mining companies and the Duz Cho companies owned by McLeod Lake Indian Band. "Today, I see they are coming to First Nations enterprises because the quality matches that of non-First Nation companies."

Help build business capacity when dealing with bands that lack the experience and expertise to participate fully in such partnerships.

Try to build relationships that can withstand changes in band governance following elections, which are held every two years. The participants noted that bands' administrative structures can be set up to weather a change in the chief and band council - the trouble is, they sometimes aren't set up appropriately.

Move beyond competing claims by recognizing all of them, not waiting for an outcome to be negotiated or adjudicated. For example, Harris said, when the Pacific Trails Pipeline agreement was reached with 15 bands, the solution was to simply take all land claims, overlapping or not, and divide the total length of pipeline right-of-way into the amount of money the proponent, Apache Canada, was offering.

Reach agreement on environmental protection. "When we're dealing with a First Nation, it's usually environment, employment and money, in that order," said Falstead. "If we get pushback anywhere - if there's what we call a 'show stopper', something that can stop a project - it's around the environment." The report both lauds and pans the province's role in building industry-First Nations partnerships.

It applauds the province's 2008 decision to share mining revenue with bands, and a subsequent forestry revenuesharing deal that also gave First Nations a greater role in forest management. And it notes the Clean Energy Act of 2010 not only includes revenue-sharing, but also establishes a fund to support First Nations who want to participate in this growing industry.

"These government initiatives have had a profound impact on how resource industries operate in British Columbia," it said. But on a sour note, "When it comes to consultation, I would just consider the government to be absent," said Falstead. "It's entirely left up to industry. The government basically says, Let us know when it's done."

Read more:

<http://www.vancouversun.com/news/Cayo+First+Nations+aiding+development+with+video/11054732/story.html#ixzz3aDvRtX2K>

Aboriginal Community Development

First Nations church will die without current pastor – parishioner

Edmonton, AB, Canada / iNews880

[Kirby Bourne](#)

May 10, 2015 05:38 pm

For the past 20 years, Reverend Jim Holland has stood at the front of the Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples in McCauley. He has baptized people, married people, and buried people. Without warning, he was recently told by the Provincial that he will be leaving the church.

Those who attend the church say that the repercussions will be felt through the community, and expressed those concerns at a meeting Sunday.

“The business community and organizations involved with Father Jim Holland reaches far and wide,” says parishioner and meeting organizer Wayne Ashley. “It’s not just this building. It’s a community built around Father Jim and the respect that he’s gained. If they’re not respecting our decision, we won’t respect theirs.”

Father Jim says he was told a few months ago by the Provincial of Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate with the Lacombe Province, Father Ken Forester that he would be leaving Sacred Heart and replaced with two Oblates.

Father Forester says a similar plan is being implemented across the country. With a smaller number of active men across the country, they plan to have several Oblates serve larger areas called “mission centres.” This plan was cultivated by at least 10 meetings over the past year and a half.

Ashley says, during his 20 years at Sacred Heart, Father Jim has worked tirelessly to help the homeless, those suffering from addiction, and those feeling the lasting effect of residential schools. Father Jim has built relationships with the people attending his church that would be difficult to recreate with someone new.

“We are Catholic to the “T” but we also incorporate some of the art, some of the ceremony, which is the same as ours,” Father Jim says. “They keep coming back because I respect them as human beings, and I respect them as people just like everybody else.”



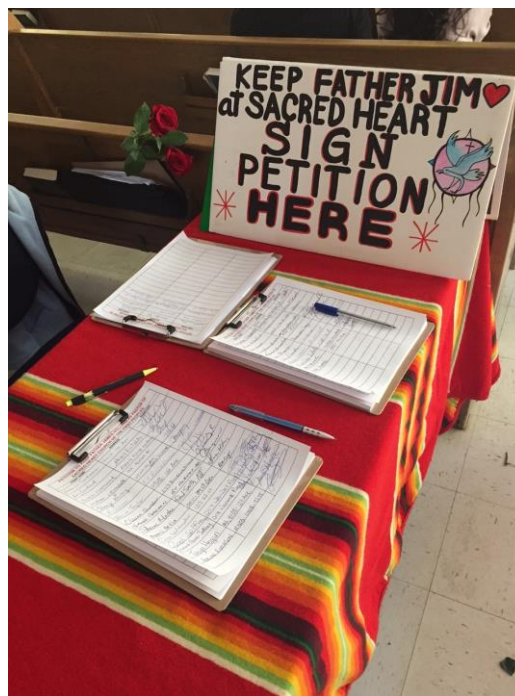
Father Jim says that continuing his programs for the vulnerable in his community will be impossible once the new group arrives. As a result, he says the church, and community, he has worked so hard to build will cease to exist.

“We don’t have fees for anything. When you start charging fees for everything people will stop coming and you won’t serve the people,” says Father Jim.

“You don’t put a person in a jet fighter and say ‘fly it,’” Ashley says. “You put a person that has flown that jet, to teach them how to fly it.”

Father Forester says there will be an opportunity for Father Jim to stay on and help with a transition period for a few years. But several parishioners that iNews880 talked to Sunday said they would not come to the church without Father Jim, and the church, and community, would greatly suffer.

“We went through a process of discernment of the whole province to take this direction,” Father Forester says. “I can’t say anymore than to say we’re not in any way abandoning what’s happening here. If that can’t be seen, I don’t know what else I can say there either.”



Father Jim says he was invited to attend the meetings that decided these changes, but says he’s too busy at his parish to take days off. He feels the ones that should have been consulted are the First Nation people.

“Oblates and their associate friends got together and made the decision,” he says. “They never invited any of the aboriginal people. But yet, they want to go into an Aboriginal parish that’s established really well and really strong and change it.”

Father Forester says that they have no plans to change what Father Jim has created in the community. But when asked point blank by iNews880 why try and fix what's not broken, he didn't have an answer other than to say that the groups of Oblates are being implemented across the country to try and create better communities.

The use of Oblates concerns Father Jim, because Oblates were a major part of the residential schools that created the Aboriginal distrust of the Catholic faith.

The parishioners of Sacred Heart have started a petition to try and convince the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate to change their minds. As of Sunday afternoon, the paper petition had over 1200 signatures, and the online version had over 2500. (kb)

Direct Link: <http://www.inews880.com/2015/05/10/first-nations-church-will-die-without-current-pastor-parishioner/>

Improvements on the way for Manitoba community spaces



The Indian and Métis Friendship Centre of Winnipeg Inc. is one of the community places approved for a grant to replace the entry door and make other accessibility improvements.

CTV Winnipeg

Published Monday, May 11, 2015 12:55PM CST

Community groups across Manitoba are receiving funds to build, upgrade or expand facilities focusing on recreation and wellness.

On Monday, the province said it is doling out than \$3 million in grants from the Community Places program to support improvements that include replacing window and door, improving accessibility and repairing ventilation systems.

Some of the community groups already approved for a grant this year include the Indian and Métis Friendship Centre of Winnipeg Inc., Variety the Children's Charity of Manitoba and Thompson Boys and Girls Club Inc.

The province said grants provided through this program are expected to help leverage another \$15 million in support from other sources.

Applicants contribute to project costs through local fundraising efforts, grants from other sources or donated labour and materials.

Since it was established in 1986, the Community Places program has provided more than \$115 million to support over 7,500 community-led projects across Manitoba.

More information on Community Places and a list of this year's approved grants can be found at www.gov.mb.ca.

Direct Link: <http://winnipeg.ctvnews.ca/improvements-on-the-way-for-manitoba-community-spaces-1.2368963>

Close the gap between Canada and its aboriginal people: AFN chief

KIM MACKRAEL

OTTAWA — The Globe and Mail

Published Wednesday, May. 13 2015, 10:15 PM EDT

Last updated Thursday, May. 14 2015, 12:06 AM EDT

The leader of the country's largest aboriginal group is calling on Ottawa to close the gap between Canada and its aboriginal people as the UN prepares to adopt a new set of sustainable development goals.

Perry Bellegarde said in an interview Wednesday that the federal government should invest more in education, training and housing to bring conditions for aboriginal Canadians in line with the rest of the country. The National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations said he plans to bring that message Thursday to a gathering of international development experts and non-governmental organizations in Gatineau, Que.

Mr. Bellegarde's comments come as the United Nations prepares to adopt a new set of global targets to replace eight millennium development goals when they expire at the end of this year. The new objectives will cover 17 target areas, ranging from ending poverty to combatting climate change and reducing inequality. Unlike the previous goals, the new

targets have been explicitly developed to be universally applicable, which means wealthy countries like Canada will be expected to work toward achieving them alongside lower-income countries.

Canada regularly places well on the UN human development index, which measures living conditions in all countries. But development experts say that inequalities within the country – particularly in relation to aboriginal Canadians – could come under scrutiny when the next set of global-development goals come into effect in 2016.

Mr. Bellegarde said that if the indicators used for the human development index were applied to aboriginal Canadians, they would place 63rd on the list. Canada as a whole ranked eighth last year on the UN index.

“In Canada, it’s all about closing the gap, and right now, there’s a huge gap between indigenous peoples and non-indigenous peoples,” Mr. Bellegarde said. He said the new development goals could help place added pressure on the government to do more to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Shannon Kindornay, a professor with Carleton University’s Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, said there is a growing recognition that many international challenges are applicable to all countries. But while Ottawa has committed to the principle of universality in the development goals, she said, the idea has not yet been put into practice at the domestic level.

Prof. Kindornay said living conditions for Canada’s aboriginal population are likely the single biggest issue that will need to be addressed for Canada to apply the new sustainable-development goals at home. “There is no question that on nearly every indicator of social, economic and environmental well-being, that the aboriginal population in Canada falls behind,” she said.

A spokeswoman for Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt said Wednesday that the government is making strategic investments aimed at improving overall well-being of First Nations people. “We will continue to bring forward concrete measures,” Andrea Richer wrote in an e-mail.

A government statement posted online earlier this year said Ottawa is committed to pursuing a realistic, focused and measurable set of post-2015 development goals that address social, economic and environmental issues.

Mr. Bellegarde, who has spoken about the UN rankings in the past, said he would raise the matter in a speech he plans to deliver on Thursday at a conference co-hosted by the Canadian Council for International Co-operation and the Canadian Association of International Development Professionals.

“There’s a connection,” Mr. Bellegarde said. “Because you know, when you start looking at ensuring sustainable energy for all, reducing inequality within and among countries ... you can see linkages to the UN declaration. Because that’s what it’s all about.”

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/close-the-gap-between-canada-and-its-aboriginal-people-afn-chief/article24430620/>

First Nations short-changed with firefighting cash: MP

Posted: Saturday, May 9, 2015 6:00 am

By Carl Clutche, CJ staff

The amount of money the federal government sets aside each year for First Nation firefighting equipment and prevention programs is spread way too thin, says NDP MP Carol Hughes.

“It’s a drop in the bucket when one considers how far \$26.3 million goes once it is divided by more than 600 (First Nation) communities,” Hughes (Algoma-Manitoulin-Kapuskasing) said Thursday in a news release.

Hughes said fatal fires are 10 times more likely to happen in aboriginal communities compared to the rest of the country, usually due to substandard housing and faulty wood stoves.

“Often the lives lost are young people who have been sacrificed due to the absence of a regulatory regime for fire services and inspections,” Hughes said.

A spokeswoman for Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada confirmed in an email that about \$26 million is spent annually “to support operations and maintenance, fire protection infrastructure and fire protection training on reserves.”

If evenly divided, the amount is about \$43,000 per community.

Hughes said that “while many First Nations have some fire-fighting capacity, too often the equipment is old and (reserves) are reliant on other better-funded forces from nearby communities.”

That was the case earlier this year when White River’s municipal fire department put out a house fire in Pic Mobert First Nation, even though the band has a new fire truck.

The band said after the fire it’s trying to build a volunteer fire service on the reserve to operate the truck. Nobody was injured in the fire. Hughes said “the problems with (First

Nation) fire services are only compounded by the persistent — and one could argue permanent — lack of suitable housing available on First Nations.”

The Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada spokeswoman said “we will continue to work with First Nation communities and organizations like the Aboriginal Firefighters Association of Canada to support education based initiatives.”

Direct Link: http://www.chroniclejournal.com/news/first-nations-short-changed-with-firefighting-cash-mp/article_bd3217dc-f60d-11e4-9fb4-7f5c6b9b7bc7.html

First Nation evacuees protest their fourth year of exile after floods forced them out

Four flood evacuees die far from home

By: Alexandra Paul

Posted: **05/9/2015 3:00 AM**

Protesters who have endured their fourth year of exile from their Interlake First Nations were circulating grim news on Friday: Four more evacuees from Lake St. Martin First Nation died this month.

The deaths of the four women in the space of a few short days was the talk among older women on the sidewalk as younger adults and children picketed in the street outside the federal Aboriginal Affairs office in Winnipeg.



Tony Marsden pushes his grandson, Jackson.



Approximately 60 evacuees from the 2011 flood, still without permanent homes after four years, marched from the city-based Lake St. Martin First Nation government office on Berry Street in Winnipeg.

Dozens of people who were evacuated from the Interlake First Nations of Lake St. Martin and Little Saskatchewan gathered outside Aboriginal Affairs on Hargrave Street before moving on to the legislature.

"We are asking the public to assist us, to push the government on this operation to return home," Lake St. Martin Chief Adrian Sinclair told reporters. "You can see the people here. They want answers. They're grassroots people. They're suffering in the city."

In 2011, to save Winnipeg and Portage la Prairie, plus thousands of acres of farmland, provincial authorities diverted an unprecedented amount of water from the Assiniboine River to Lake Manitoba and through the Fairford Dam to Lake St. Martin, flooding the First Nations.

Four years later, some 1,200 evacuees still live in apartments and home rentals, their rents paid by the Canadian Red Cross, which runs its aid services under contract with the federal government.

Another 374 evacuees from Little Saskatchewan are also in Winnipeg, some still in hotels for the past four years.

Altogether, there are 2,000 First Nation flood evacuees housed in rentals in Winnipeg. Four years of evacuation costs now total \$122 million as of May, a federal spokeswoman confirmed Friday.

Of the four women who died this month, a story about one of them stood out. The woman, named Marilyn, was 57 years old and the day before her death she'd met briefly with Canada's most powerful indigenous leader.

"She was an evacuee, and she'd been on dialysis," explained her friend, Myrle Ballard, a University of Manitoba academic who is also from Lake St. Martin.

"She was telling the national chief (Perry Bellegarde) just the day before that she wanted to go home. The next day she died," Ballard said. "She went home. In a box."

The plight of evacuees is rife with sad stories, the women said.

Chiefs and government officials report there have been plenty of meetings to find a way to get people back home, but there are also stumbling blocks, including the bureaucracy itself and the massive scope of the resettlement.

Little Saskatchewan leaders say talks there have been stalled since last November over a controversial easement the province insists the First Nation leaders sign. They say if they sign, they could lose 80 per cent of the reserve land base to future flooding.

With half the population living on the reserve and the other half in houses and hotels in Winnipeg, Little Saskatchewan leaders countered with a demand their resettlement package should include new houses for more than simply the evacuees. They also want homes for the kids who've grown up on the streets of Winnipeg since 2011 and now have their own families. They also want new homes for the people who stayed behind on the reserve.

That amounts to a brand-new community for the entire population of about 600 people.

"I'm getting to the point of doing roadblocks or something. The cottage owners in this province who were affected by the flood are already back home, after two years. So why does it take our First Nations four years and we didn't see one house built in our community yet?" Coun. Darrell Shorting said.

He said he's attended one meeting with the federal appointee to the file and the provincial representative since January. Another meeting is planned for next week.

"The meetings fall on deaf ears," Shorting said.

There are a lot of evacuees who also disagree with that hard line.

They don't want to give away their land but they insist leaders should settle the evacuees first, never mind housing for people who stayed behind in 2011.

Direct Link: <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/dozens-protest-years-of-exile-303163731.html>

New urban reserve proposed for Regina

Gas station, convenience store proposed by Nekaneet First Nation

[CBC News](#) Posted: May 11, 2015 1:32 PM CT Last Updated: May 11, 2015 1:32 PM CT



Nekaneet First Nation hopes to have an urban reserve created on the north edge of Regina. (Google Maps/CBC)

Regina is looking at having a fifth urban First Nations reserve within its boundaries.

Nekaneet First Nation's main land base is about 390 kilometres southwest of Regina, but it's looking to set up an urban reserve at 4400 Diefenbaker Dr. on the north edge of the city.

If all goes according to plan, the site will be home to a gas station and convenience store.

The band will have to apply to Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Canada to convert the property into reserve land.

Before that happens, it will have to sign an agreement with the city to pay the equivalent of property taxes in exchange for police, fire and other services.

The band will also pay fees for water, sewer and garbage removal.

Because the gas station will be built above a particularly sensitive region over an aquifer, an underground water system, Nekaneet will be required to build tanks above ground and take special precautions to control potential spills.

The proposal goes to the city's executive committee on Wednesday and Regina City Council on May 25.

Other Regina urban reserves, include one operated by the Piapot First Nation in the North Central neighbourhood, have been up and running for years.

The city says there have been no serious problems with any of the urban reserves.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/new-urban-reserve-proposed-for-regina-1.3069776>

Aboriginal Crime, Justice & Law Enforcement

Inquest into deaths of aboriginal students should hear evidence on racism, youth advocate urges

Ontario's children and youth advocate says social isolation a factor in deaths of seven youths who left remote first nations communities and moved to Thunder Bay to pursue a high school education



Ontario's children and youth advocate Irwin Elman suggests an inquest into the deaths of seven aboriginal high school students will not be effective unless it takes racism into account.

Published on Fri May 08 2015

TORONTO—Ontario's children and youth advocate is questioning the effectiveness of an inquest that will probe the deaths of seven aboriginal high school students without specifically taking racism into account.

Irwin Elman says he's seeking a judicial review into the scope of the inquest, which presiding coroner David Eden outlined yesterday.

Eden will be probing the deaths of seven youths who all left remote first nations communities and moved to Thunder Bay, Ont. to pursue a high school education.

But Elman says Eden is making a mistake by not hearing evidence on the effect that racism may have had on the mental health of the seven students.

Elman says the victims' families have previously indicated that racism contributed to a sense of social isolation that their loved ones felt during their studies.

Elman says ignoring its effects does a disservice to the students, their families and future generations.

"As a voice for children and youth in Ontario, my office knows that the language of racism is real to First Nations young people," Elman said in a statement released on Friday.

"This is not about politics, nor is it about laying blame for young people.

"Racism is real in every facet of their lives.

"And to rule it out of this inquest is to rule out the reality lived by the seven youth who died and the reality that continue to exist for First Nations youth who are watching and waiting for all of us to make change."

In 2012, Ontario's chief coroner ordered an inquest into the deaths of the seven students who ranged in age from 15 to 21.

Jethro Anderson, Curran Strang, Robyn Harper, Paul Panacheese, Reggie Bushie, Kyle Morrisseau and Jordan Wabasse all died while studying in Thunder Bay between 2000 and 2011.

The inquest is set to get underway in the fall.

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/05/08/inquest-into-deaths-of-aboriginal-students-should-hear-evidence-on-racism-youth-advocate-urges.html>

Cree woman walks coast to coast to spark talk on lateral violence

Isabel Okanese takes steps to raise awareness among First Nations, non-status and Métis peoples

By Wawmeesh G. Hamilton, [CBC News](#) Posted: May 08, 2015 2:31 PM ET Last Updated: May 08, 2015 4:53 PM ET



Isabel Okanese (front), who is Oji-Cree, is no stranger to lateral violence. She grew up hearing she didn't look or sound native and that her Cree teachings were wrong. (Kelly Nakatsuka/CBC)

A Victoria woman is literally taking steps to raise awareness about lateral violence among First Nations, non-status and Métis peoples.

This week Isabel Okanese began a cross-country walk at Mile Zero in Victoria, B.C., and will end it more than 6,000 kilometres away in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The walk started on May 5 and is expected to end in October.

The walk is called Miyo-wicehtowin which is Cree for "living in harmony together". The intent is to spark discussion about lateral violence within First Nations communities.

"Lateral violence is a very big problem. It covers a lot of areas and stems from colonization," said Okanese, who is Oji-Cree, from central Alberta.

Lateral violence can be defined as verbal abuse, mental abuse, emotional abuse, spiritual abuse and even physical abuse, she added.



Isabel Okanese, front left, is joined by some of her supporters who are supporting her cross-country walk. (Kelly Nakatsuka/CBC)

"Lateral violence is what we do to each other."

Okanese, 43, is no stranger to lateral violence.

Her family was among many aboriginal people who were disenfranchised, or stripped of Indian status, and hence categorized as non-status First Nations people.

Stripping the status designation had a socially chilling effect on the family. Okanese grew up hearing that she didn't look, sound or act native.

"I've been ostracised, lots of gossiping and backstabbing," she said. "I've been treated as if I'm not even Oji-Cree."

Okanese practices what she preaches about lateral violence.

"I have to catch myself when I find myself thinking or saying something unkind about other aboriginal people," she said. "This isn't easy, to try to be kind to someone who has been unkind."

Okanese is travelling along Highway 1 across eight provinces. She has a small support group and will be sleeping in a motor home.

She plans to stop at First Nations communities along the way to address lateral violence.

'I've been ostracised ... I've been treated as if I'm not even Oji-Cree.'

- Isabel Okanese, Oji-Cree walker

Okanese hopes to encourage aboriginal people to treat each other with respect whether they are Métis, non-status Indian or First Nations.

"We need to come back together as one family," she said.

"If we end the internalized racism and stop fighting amongst ourselves then we can look after the issues that are really important."

The journey started with a sunrise ceremony at Mile Zero in Victoria. Okanese also plans to smudge every morning before walking.

She's carrying a vial of water from Mile Zero which she intends to pour into the ocean at Nova Scotia as a symbol of unity.

Okanese encourages aboriginal people to walk with her along the way.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/cree-woman-walks-coast-to-coast-to-spark-talk-on-lateral-violence-1.3066593>

Ont. child advocate seeks review of scope of First Nations students inquest

"This is not about politics, nor is it about laying blame" says Irwin Elman, Ontario's child advocate

[CBC News](#) Posted: May 08, 2015 1:27 PM ET Last Updated: May 08, 2015 5:20 PM ET



The seven students who have died in Thunder Bay since 2000 are, from top left, Jethro Anderson, 15, Curran Strang, 18, Paul Panacheese, 17, Robyn Harper, 18, Reggie Bushie, 15, Kyle Morriseau, 17, and Jordan Wabasse, 15. (CBC)

The Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth wants a judicial review of the presiding coroner's decision on the scope of the inquest into the deaths of seven First Nations students in Thunder Bay.

Irwin Elman said he is "most disappointed" that the coroner will not receive evidence of racism and its effects on the mental health and well-being of the seven young people, aged 15 to 21.

They were all living away from their families and remote communities, in order to attend high school in Thunder Bay.

"The language of racism is real to First Nations young people. This is not about politics, nor is it about laying blame for young people," Elman said in a release.



Ontario's children and youth advocate Irwin Elman says he is disappointed a coroner's inquest into the death of seven First Nations students in Thunder Bay will not receive evidence of the effect of racism on their mental health. (CBC)

Racism is real in every facet of their lives, stated Elman.

"And to rule it out of this inquest is to rule out the realities lived by the seven youth who died and the realities that continue to exist for First Nations youth who are watching and waiting for all of us to make change" he wrote.

Elman said he asking his legal counsel to seek a judicial review of the coroner's decision.

"We owe it to the deceased and their families to ensure that the factors and conditions that may have contributed to their deaths are examined," said Elman in a written statement.

"This includes the ugliness of racism."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/ont-child-advocate-seeks-review-of-scope-of-first-nations-students-inquest-1.3066762>

Fraud charges stayed against Enoch First Nations school administrator

By Elise Stolte, Edmonton Journal May 10, 2015



A policeman talks to a protester in March 2011 outside the Edmonton Marriott at River Cree Resort, where a group of parents and students from the Enoch First Nations Reserve raised concerns about allegations of fraud at Kitaskinaw School.

EDMONTON - Charges have been stayed against the last of two school administrators accused of fraud at the Enoch Cree First Nation.

“It’s been one heck of a roller-coaster,” said Deanna Morin, the former assistant principal at Kitaskinaw School, who was facing two counts of fraud. Those charges were stayed April 17.

Her mother, Phyllis Cardinal, the former principal, was charged with one count of fraud. That charge was stayed last November.

In 2011, enrolment was up and the kindergarten to Grade 12 school was seeing its first success from a new federal pilot project targeting reading and math skills.

Then three staff members told the band council Cardinal and Morin had asked them to falsify attendance and grant records. Band members protested outside the band office. When the band council was split on whether disciplinary action was needed, then-chief Harry Sharphead took the allegations to the RCMP. Eventually, charges were laid.

The principal’s supporters said at the time the problems were simply mistakes and those calling for action had a “lynch-mob mentality.”

In addition, the band was politically divided. Sharphead and the accusers were aligned with one side of the split, while Morin and Cardinal had been hired by the other.

With the charges behind her, Morin is hoping to restart her career. She blames jealousy for the problems.

“Not single-handedly, but we built that school from the ground up,” she said. “They wanted our jobs. I guess to them we made it look easy.”

For Cardinal, now 63, the charges forced her into retirement. She had 34 years of experience, including as founding principal of Edmonton's Amiskwaciy Academy. But "who's going to hire someone with that hanging over their head?" she said.

She's hoping to work part-time or as a consultant.

Like most First Nations schools, Kitaskinaw School is independent, with no school board to ensure internal band politics don't affect how it is run. That means teachers and administrators have few places to turn for help when conflicts arise, Cardinal said.

"When I first started in education, my late mother was alive. She was a teacher as well. She advised me, 'Phyllis, never go work for your own people.' I went against her advice. I really did believe I could make a difference for the young people," Cardinal said. "We're in this crab in a bucket syndrome. We have this tendency to pull each other down."

Direct Link:

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/Fraud+charges+stayed+against+Enoch+First+Nations+school+administrator/11044588/story.html>

Aboriginal Education & Youth

Red River College powwow honours 100 aboriginal graduates

College celebrating more aboriginal graduates than ever before this year

[CBC News](#) Posted: May 08, 2015 11:58 AM CT Last Updated: May 08, 2015 4:42 PM CT

About 100 aboriginal graduates of Red River College (RRC) are being honoured in Winnipeg this afternoon.

The college's School of Indigenous Education is holding its 15th annual powwow for aboriginal graduates at the Notre Dame campus on Friday.

This year's ceremony features more graduates than ever before, according to officials.

Mary Favel was at the ceremony, but her path to graduation wasn't easy.



After working and putting her two kids through college, Mary Favel is now set to graduate from Red River this spring. (CBC)

"I was married young and had my children and had to work to support them and get them through school," said Favel.

"I wanted them to get their education and put certain things in my life on hold and I always thought 'I want to go back to school.'"

Both her daughter and son graduated from RRC.

"I knew it was my time now," she said. "It's an honour. It's a very proud occasion ... education is a once in a lifetime opportunity. There's light at the end of the tunnel and you can make it. If I can make it, you can make it and it's worth it."

Festivities started in the morning with a pipe ceremony, grand entry and powwow. The graduation ceremony started at 1 p.m. and is followed by a feast at 5 p.m.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/red-river-college-powwow-honours-100-aboriginal-graduates-1.3066845>

Inuk elder provides inspiring message to graduates

[Cory Hurley](#)

Published on May 09, 2015

If Sarah Anala's life story inspires the graduates of Grenfell Campus, Memorial University, they should have no problem overcoming obstacles to reach the pinnacle of whatever career they seek.



Sarah Anala addresses the crowd at the Grenfell Campus, Memorial University convocation Friday.

The Inuk elder received an honorary doctorate of laws during the university's convocation at its west coast campus Friday morning.

The "residential school survivor" mixed no words when talking about the racist policies and treatment she received throughout her life, starting in her early days in Nain, Labrador, now known as Nunatsiavut.

And why would she mix words? The words she heard countless times — the insults of dirty Huskimaw, ugly chink, squaw, stupid and dumb — were certainly not mixed.

The racist policy which existed at the time of the residential schools was "to take the Indian out of the child and take the Eskimo out of the savage."

Anala, projecting confidence and eviction, told the congregation she was not having any part of that.

"No punishing whip, corner, a two-foot leather strap or being sent to bed without supper were strong enough to eliminate from my soul and inner core my identity, Inuttitut language, culture, Inuit teachings and traditions," she said.

Anala is a health care worker, social justice advocate and an Inuit liaison and elder for the Correctional Services of Canada. Ken Jacobson, university orator, said her many roles during her distinguished career include writer, researcher, interpreter, translator, counselor, consultant, support person, caregiver and healer. She is a recipient of both the order of Canada and the Queen's Golden Jubilee Award.

It all began by her "standing up to racism, oppression, denigration, efforts at acculturation and annihilation, cultural/spiritual misappropriation and the impacts of historical, familial, societal and psychological trauma of enforced colonization."

It was the direction of her father and other elders to become educated, but to never forget her own language, culture and traditions that gave her the drive. While not being beaten down by what she faced, it was also important not to become bitter from it.

“But, today, and this is what I am most proud of, I carry no hate or anger,” she said. “They are only self-destructive forces that can consume and regurgitate the spirit.”

Through her self-empowerment, she was able to strengthen and better others. She asked the graduates to try, in their own way, to do the same.

Direct Link: <http://www.thewesternstar.com/News/Local/2015-05-09/article-4140828/Inuk-elder-provides-inspiring-message-to-graduates/1>

Aboriginal student overcomes obstacles to win scholarship



Ch’nook Scholar

Candice Loring—UBC Okanagan’s newest Ch’nook Scholar

Posted: Sunday, May 10, 2015 9:20 pm

Contributed by UBC Okanagan |

Overcoming obstacles has been a way of life for Candice Loring—UBC Okanagan’s newest Ch’nook Scholar.

The mother of two boys and third-year management student is also president of UBC Okanagan’s Indigenous Student Association, a peer support mentor for Aboriginal students, and is only the second UBC Okanagan student to be awarded a Ch’nook Scholarship.

The Ch'nook Indigenous Business Education Initiative recognizes the top 17 Indigenous undergraduate and graduate management students from post-secondary schools across B.C. and Alberta. The program aims to help grow business capacity and development within Aboriginal communities.

"I'm not at school just for myself," Loring says. "I'm here for my children and for my community. I want to go back to my reserve and tell everybody how important going to school is."

Born in a small community near Hazelton, B.C., Loring's first few years were full of transitions, especially after her parents split up. Her mother moved to Nakusp, where they lived off-reserve, and where Loring was the only obvious Aboriginal student in her school. Lack of self-identity stole young Loring's drive and determination. By Grade 10 she quit school.

After moving to West Kelowna, pumping gas for a living and working in a restaurant, the dream of running a business with her mother, a pastry chef, motivated her to return to school. At 27, with two young children at home, and as nervous as can be, Loring began studying through UBC Okanagan's Aboriginal Access Studies program.

But just months into her studies—and just as exams were getting underway—Loring's mother was diagnosed with cancer and died two weeks later. Instead of turning back, however, Loring was more determined than ever to finish her education.

"Coming back to school as a mature student worked out for me because I didn't have the same distractions as my peers," she says. "I had a different focus and a family to think about."

With the dream of running a business with her mother at an end, Loring focused her attention on her studies, UBC's Indigenous Student Association, and her family. Her husband, who suffers from a progressive debilitating condition, supports her by staying home and caring for their two sons—Caleb, 6, and Jonah, 7, who has Down syndrome.

In 2013 Loring received the UBC Okanagan Woman of the Year award for her community involvement, which included work on a series of Truth and Reconciliation events on campus.

"UBC's Faculty of Management is extremely proud that one of the 2014 Ch'nook Scholars is studying with us," said Roger Sudgen, Faculty of Management dean. "Candice's pathway to the Faculty of Management is illustrative of her determination, drive, and ability."

Now a third-year student, she has a new dream—to return to the Eagle clan and be given her "name." She wants to give back to her community by becoming a band manager or economic development officer and help Aboriginals realize their dreams.

“UBC Okanagan has an incredible Indigenous program, and the support I’ve received from UBC and the Faculty of Management has been amazing,” said Loring.

Ch’nook Scholars give back to the Aboriginal community through a “Cousin Event” where they speak to Grade 9 and 10 students about business studies as a pathway. Loring’s Cousins Day took place in March and 16 high school students spent the day with her.

Direct Link: http://www.kelownadailycourier.ca/news/article_152d3aec-f795-11e4-bcb7-170d615f153c.html

Self-declaration push

[Nathan Liewicki](#)

Published on May 12, 2015

Prairie South to hold information night at Riverview Collegiate on May 20

Less than five per cent of the Prairie South School Division’s student population has self-declared as aboriginal.



Vivian Gauvin (left), Prairie South School Division First Nations and Metis consultant, and Isabelle Hanson, Saskatchewan Polytechnic Aboriginal Education counsellor, pose for a photo at Riverview Collegiate on Tuesday.

In order to “better meet and understand the needs of the student as a whole,” said PSSD First Nations and Metis consultant Vivian Gauvin, each family in the division received a small pamphlet about aboriginal self-declaration last fall.

The voluntary and confidential program applies to students of First Nation, Metis and Inuit ancestry. In PSSD, there is also no need to present official documentation.

Despite the brochure, Gauvin told the Times-Herald on Tuesday that it's going to take time for people to understand why self-declaration is beneficial. That is one of the reasons why PSSD will be hosting an information night detailing the spinoff benefits associated with self-declaration.

Riverview Collegiate will host the session on May 20 at 7 p.m.

From a division perspective, being aware of self-declared individuals is expected to impact programming and services found in schools.

"We just need the conversation about self-declaring itself to start," said Gauvin. "I think after the information night people might start talking and maybe that hesitation will go away.

"This is just going to be a reminder of what's happening in our division, but it's still a choice."

It is a choice that does, however, have benefits, noted Saskatchewan Polytechnic Aboriginal Education counsellor Isabelle Hanson.

"They get designated seating in programs," she said. "If they declare, they can get one of those seats at Saskatchewan Polytechnic.

"The other benefit is they have the ability to apply for scholarships open just to aboriginal students."

Gauvin also believes that students who self-declare can become more successful, completing high school and moving onto post-secondary studies.

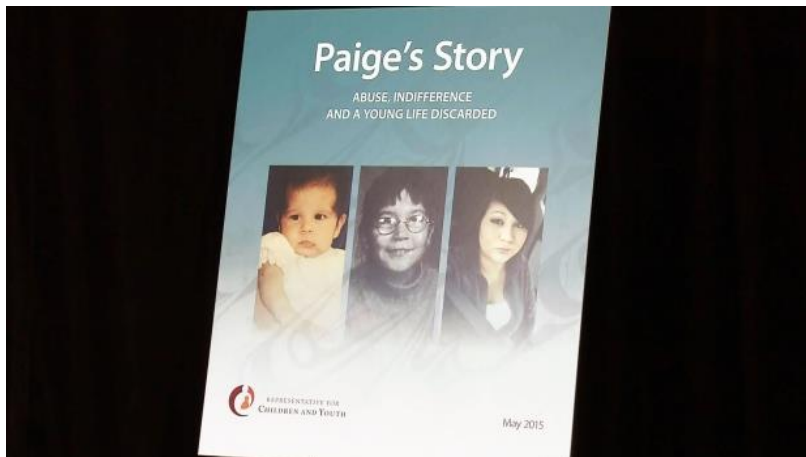
Nathan Liewicki can be reached at 306-691-1256 or follow him on Twitter [@liewicks](https://twitter.com/liewicks)

Benefits of self-declaration

- *More classrooms will celebrate aboriginal peoples' histories, cultures and perspectives.*
- *Teachers and staff will better understand their aboriginal students.*
- *Schools will be better informed about the aboriginal students' needs and achievements.*
- *Aboriginal students will succeed and stay in school.*
- *Aboriginal students will graduate and enter the workforce or post-secondary studies.*

Direct Link: <http://www.mjtimes.sk.ca/News/Local/2015-05-12/article-4144540/Self-declaration-push/1>

Youth representative blames B.C. government for aboriginal teen's death



The Canadian Press

Published Thursday, May 14, 2015 11:35AM PDT

Last Updated Thursday, May 14, 2015 7:43PM PDT

VANCOUVER -- The family of an aboriginal teenager who died of an overdose in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside wept after hearing the horrific details of how the system failed her.

Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, British Columbia's representative for children and youth, delivered a scathing report Thursday that accused the province and front-line workers of chronic indifference to First Nations children.

The 19-year-old woman, only identified as Paige, died next to a communal washroom in a city park in April 2013. Her short life was filled with violence, neglect, open drug use and police encounters -- and yet government workers failed to intervene, Turpel-Lafond said.

"Was this because she was a young aboriginal girl? Was her fate seen as unavoidable by those who worked with her?" she asked at a news conference.

"The professional indifference that plagued her life -- that prevented her from receiving a minimal standard of child protection, a minimal standard of health care and even a minimal standard of education services -- must be the product of a system that has effectively discounted the value of girls like her."

The report states the Ministry of Children and Family Development inexplicably allowed Paige to remain in the care of her mother, despite being the subject of 30 child protection reports in her lifetime.

Her life was chaotic from the start, as she was exposed to her mother's drug use and moved more than 50 times to different homeless shelters, safe houses and single-room occupancy hotels, the report details.

Paige's aunt, Frances Robson, and her husband Lorne both shook with tears after Turpel-Lafond finished delivering the report.

"It was just hard seeing her picture up there," said Robson in an interview. "When you see her there and you see that she's actually gone, that was the hardest part."

The ministry rejected the couple's repeated requests for custody of Paige because they asked for help paying for a two-bedroom apartment and groceries, Robson said.

Yet social workers constantly called them at all hours of the night to ask them to pick her up from the hospital or the police station, she recalled. They had to borrow money to pay for gas or a taxi, bring her home and remind her to eat before she disappeared again, Robson said.

"We didn't know everything that was going on in her life unless we were there. Finding out some of the things that we did find out (in the report), it really hit hard that Paige had gone through all this."

The teen suffered from a syndrome that left her legally blind without her glasses and caused heart problems, the report stated. She developed her own substance abuse problems and wound up unconscious and incoherent in the emergency room or in detox centres at least 17 times.

Turpel-Lafond said the investigation is among the most troubling her office has ever conducted, but it is sadly not unique. She estimates there are about 100 to 150 aboriginal youth similar to Paige in the Downtown Eastside.

Children and Family Development Minister Stephanie Cadieux said in a statement that she was horrified by the report and that her ministry will work with other service providers to learn from what happened.

She said the ministry will form a "rapid-response team model" for youth on the Downtown Eastside so that kids can be helped as soon as possible before they become entrenched in the neighbourhood.

But she offered few details of the teams, telling reporters they were simply a starter concept that will begin with getting together ministries, police and the City of Vancouver.

Direct Link: <http://bc.ctvnews.ca/youth-representative-blames-b-c-government-for-aboriginal-teen-s-death-1.2374340>

U of M boasts highest number of aboriginal medical grads in 5 years

77 of 107 graduates plan to stay in Manitoba for their medical residencies

[CBC News](#) Posted: May 14, 2015 12:34 PM CT Last Updated: May 14, 2015 5:05 PM CT

The University of Manitoba's latest class of medical graduates includes its largest group of aboriginal graduates in the past five years.

The nine self-declared indigenous graduates of the College of Medicine plan to stay in Manitoba to complete their residencies, with five of them going into family medicine.

"They've always been under-represented in our workforce — in the health workforce — even representative to their own population numbers, but more importantly they're such an important part of the communities we serve," said Dr. Brian Postl, the dean of the College of Medicine at the university. "Many communities have lots of health issues that we have to deal with, and we think we can do that more effectively if we have more indigenous physicians participating."

The U of M has had a special stream for indigenous students since 1979, according to Postl.



A total of 107 students of the University of Manitoba's College of Medicine graduated on Thursday. (Kiran Dhillon/CBC)

"It still has not hit me yet," said Allyson Barnes, who graduated on Thursday.

Barnes is Metis, and both her parents are physicians.

When her father became a physician he opted not to self-identify as Metis.

"They didn't self-identify because it was so hard. You wouldn't want to self-identify in a small community, so he didn't," she said. "He would've been one of the first aboriginal physicians in Manitoba."

Barnes will start a family medicine residence in Winnipeg and move on to more rural areas after that.

She said the road to graduation was difficult, but her father helped break down some of the barriers.

"We face a lot of different standards – things that are said. People say things, sometimes they're outright views, sometimes they're hidden views, but there's still a lot of racism that goes on."

A total of 107 students graduated on Thursday, 77 of whom plan to stay in Manitoba for their residencies, according to the provincial government.

The province says 34 graduates staying in the province will go into family medicine. Of that number, 19 will go to rural and northern communities. One graduate will undertake an anaesthesiology residency in Brandon, Man.

Changes made to get more LGBT, single parent doctors

Earlier this week, the university approved plans to make it easier for students from lower socio-economic statuses to go into medical school.

About 110 students are accepted to the school a year, approximately 10 of whom are from outside the province.

The number of out-of-province entrants will be cut to five, with the other five spots going to single parents, children of single parents, indigenous applicants, non-heterosexual applicants and those with lower incomes.

"The latest [changes are] just to try to represent our interest in having a workforce that represents the community that we serve," said Postl. "We know it's harder for students who come from lower socio-economic backgrounds to access schools, so this gives them an opportunity they may not otherwise have to come to medical school."

Postl emphasized the candidates still have to be highly qualified and able to take on the schooling.

Those students would still have to pay the same tuition.

"It's a strenuous effort to get into medical school. You really have to show strong academic achievement," said Postl. "To get strong academic achievement you have to have access to textbooks, a quiet place to study and not to mention three or four years of university tuition before coming in."

He said even costs for the MCAT and the interview process can play a part in who can become a doctor.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/u-of-m-boasts-highest-number-of-aboriginal-medical-grads-in-5-years-1.3074604>

'Sad that we lost our families'

By [Mary Katherine Keown](#), The Sudbury Star

Saturday, May 9, 2015 12:06:49 EDT AM



The Young Thunderbird Singers, based at Sudbury's Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre, closed Friday's designation ceremony at Kina Gbezhgomi Child and Family Services with a song and a little drumming. (Mary Katherine Keown/The Sudbury Star)

It is safe to assume that removing a child from his or her home is nearly always a last resort. But sometimes, there are no other options. Foster care has a contentious reputation, especially with respect to aboriginal children, but as of last month, families in seven First Nations communities in Northern Ontario have alternatives that are respectful, inclusive and culturally harmonious.

Denise Morrow, the executive director of Kina Gbezhgomi Child and Family Services, located on Newgate Avenue, said last month's designation means the organization can offer a viable, community-based alternative to the court system.

"Prior to designation, we had prevention services, family and community support, and a foster care license," she explained after Friday's ceremony. "Now, we can provide that full circle of care. We're able to provide service to children in care, through customary care."

Kina Gbezhgomi can also investigate claims of child mistreatment.

Customary care, which is voluntary, has been a traditional practice amongst many First Nations. It includes advocacy components and circumvents the court system by placing children with members of their extended families (or another appropriate family) when they need to be removed from the home. Parents retain their parental rights and are centrally involved in decision-making processes. The goal is always reunification once conditions improve.

"All decisions are made from a joint, collaborative perspective, empowering the family to lead that plan," Morrow said. "Communities know their families the best. The other area where we're unique is the cultural foundation -- looking at providing traditional supports within the member First Nations."

Ogimaa Duke Peltier, chief of Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve on Manitoulin Island, explained the organization has adopted a case-conferencing model, whereby extended members of a child's family -- including aunts, uncles and grandparents -- are included in intervention plans.

"We want parents involved," he told The Star. "The parenting skills haven't necessarily been transferred down to them, as a result of inter-generational impacts their families have experienced. It's our opportunity now, with Kina Gbezhgomi, to break that cycle. (The family) develops a plan that includes community supports."

That plan could include prevention, nutrition and fiscal management programs. Parents, as well as their children, are focal points of the Kina Gbezhgomi model.

"We want to ensure families stay together, with the hopes that intervention allows families to stay intact," Peltier explained. "Services are provided to shore up whatever the family's gone through. It's personalized -- there aren't necessarily the standards that are dictated through the Family Services Act. They're adhered to, but not necessarily enforced to a T, because the standards in the community are different than what exists in the mainstream. For example, some houses are over-crowded and families can't be faulted for that."

Irene Kells, the chief of Zhiibaahaasing First Nation on Manitoulin Island, believes the time was ripe for the designation. It makes strides in mitigating the damage done by residential schools and the systemic racism that cleaved families.

"It's sad that we lost our families -- our mothers and fathers -- when we were small," she said. "Here we are celebrating, when our right that always was, is recognized. And it is our right to look after our own kids."

Keeping families together is simply a matter of logic, as Morrow said disruptions can be deeply traumatizing for all involved.

"The elders speak of a spiritual disconnection that occurs when a child is removed from a family," she explained. "In First Nations, a child is not only removed from the (immediate) family, but from their extended family and supportive community network, such as school and friends. The impact is significant."

Tracy McCharles, the provincial minister of Children and Youth Services, who is also responsible for women's issues, attended Friday's ceremony. She said her government looks forward to collaborating with Kina Gbezhgomi, as well as its five counterparts -- there are now six child and family service agencies rooted in aboriginal communities of Ontario.

"This designation's been in the works for a very, very long time and our government has wanted to partner with the community to make it official and to make it a reality, so that culturally appropriate services can be provided, so that histories and traditions can be honoured and respected. Our government will continue to work closely with Kina."

Regardless of ethnicity or religion, keeping kids and parents together benefits all Ontarians.

"Our goal -- as a community, as a government and as parents -- is to keep families intact," she said. "In the context of aboriginal designations, it's to make sure that services, programs and processes are respectful of the community and culture. ... It's appropriate to honour histories and traditions of a community."

Morrow said the idea was first born more than 30 years ago, in 1984.

Kina Gbezhgomi Child and Family Services serves seven member communities, including the First Nations of Sheguiandah, M'Chigeeng, Sheshegwaning, Zhiibaahaasing, Aundeck Omni Kaning and Whitefish River, as well as Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve.

Direct Link: <http://www.thesudburystar.com/2015/05/09/sad-that-we-lost-our-families--n-children-agreement-gives-native-organizations-more-control-over-foster-care>

Aboriginal leader calls for indigenous education initiatives

By Tracy Sherlock, Vancouver Sun May 14, 2015



Wab Kinew is the University of Winnipeg's vice-president for indigenous relations.

Canada would be a better place if everyone had more knowledge about indigenous languages and cultures, aboriginal leader Wab Kinew told hundreds of education leaders in Whistler on Wednesday.

Kinew, who is a musician, journalist and University of Winnipeg vice-president for indigenous relations, was speaking at a national conference for school principals and vice-principals called Connecting Leaders: Inspiring Learning.

In an inspirational and moving presentation, Kinew said if the goal is to cultivate innovation in schools, students should be taught that there is more than one way to think.

"Shouldn't we teach ... that there is a variety of world views? Some of those new ways of thinking about problems should come from indigenous people," he said.

He used Facebook as an example of a company that used an Aboriginal idea to drive its innovation.

Mark Zuckerberg, founder of Facebook, "thought of (the social media network) as a global potlatch", Kinew said.

"This company has generated a huge amount of wealth, and some part of their innovation was created by learning about aboriginal culture," Kinew said.

Although this is often misunderstood, aboriginal learning was very systematized and formalized, Kinew said. “Our traditions are rich and complex and have a tremendous depth that I don’t think is really appreciated,” he said.

Research by the Centre for the Study of Living Standards shows that if aboriginal students had the same educational outcomes as other Canadians and the same access to employment, the Canadian economy would grow, tax revenue would grow, and government expenditures would shrink, Kinew said.

Long ago, a native leader proposed that the Europeans and the indigenous people should exchange children so they could learn about each others’ way of life and the two cultures could live in peace.

“Obviously, this vision was not fulfilled — only the native children were taken,” Kinew said. “Had this vision been realized, where would we be today? Would Canada look different? Yes.”

He said the leader’s idea that education could be the foundation for living in peace and harmony should be a way forward for Canada today.

For example, Kinew said that in indigenous culture, “the chief should be the poorest one in the community.”

“What they’re saying is that if you want to be a leader, it’s not about you. If you want to be a leader, it should be about a life of service,” he said. “If someone in your community is hungry, you should give them your food. If someone in your community is cold, you should give them your blanket.”

Kinew said if people grew up hearing this, their values and their moral compass would be vastly different. Other examples he gave were about how to deal with differences between people and how to protect the environment. He said Tatanka Iyotanke, known as Sitting Bull, said during the Indian Wars that “in order for there to be peace on these lands, it is not necessary for eagles to be crows.

“He’s saying that it is not necessary for us to be exactly alike to share the lands and live together,” Kinew said. “Reconciliation shouldn’t be a second chance at assimilation. ... We shouldn’t seek to humiliate our opponents. Really, the real goal should be reconciliation.”

Concerning the environment, he said globalized society views the natural world as subservient to man, while aboriginal culture says, “We don’t own the land, the land owns us.”

“Would we be in the same situation of environmental degradation if everyone in this country had learned the aboriginal way of life? I would suggest to you, probably not,” Kinew said.

Kinew began his presentation, which was introduced with a First Nations song and a presentation by high school students about murdered and missing aboriginal women, with a long passage in his native language.

“I always like to do that because Ojibway was the ... trade language of this country for hundreds of years, and yet now very few people can recognize it,” he said “For crying out loud, our country has an aboriginal name, yet who among us can properly explain the origins of that name? How can we claim to be Canadian if we can’t understand what the name our country means?”

Kinew talked about several initiatives at the University of Winnipeg that are acting as a pipeline for aboriginal children from the time they are toddlers until the time they enter university. For example, the university was perhaps the first in Canada to waive tuition payments for former foster children. Beginning in 2016, the university will require all students to take a mandatory aboriginal studies course.

In another program, teenage girls learn about aboriginal culture and then teach their peers about it. In another, young children learn about science using aboriginal language and cultural teachings to interpret it.

Kinew’s father was a residential school student. He said his father’s name was changed, he was abused, starved and lost his culture and language. Not only that, but Kinew said he was part of an experiment in which additives were put in flour that was fed to the students.

“Think about what that says. That happened in this country, within living memory,” Kinew said. “We are in an era of truth and reconciliation. I like to turn that around and say, ‘No truth, no reconciliation.’”

But today, Kinew’s sister is working on her PhD at Harvard, which shows that there are some very notable success stories in the aboriginal community.

“The socio-economic indicators, generally speaking, are grim, but there are some positive indicators. The education gap still exists, but there are now 27,000 indigenous students in post-secondary institutions so the ship is turning,” Kinew said. “(This) is the face of Aboriginal resurgence — young, educated, successful by any measure, but also deeply connected to Aboriginal culture, language and community. Also predominantly female.”

Kinew said all Canadians should push for better outcomes for aboriginal students and want Canada “to be the greatest nation in the world — a nation in which every child can meet their potential bolstered by a fair and just education.”

Direct Link:

<http://www.vancouversun.com/life/Aboriginal+leader+calls+indigenous+education+initia tives/11053412/story.html>

Aboriginal Health

ACC offers free six-month health care aide program for First Nation, Metis

By: Ashley Robinson

Monday, May. 11, 2015 at 9:39 AM |

Assiniboine Community College is aiming to train 25 new Aboriginal health care aides as part of their free six-month certificate program announced Friday.

The one-time trial program, which is partially funding by the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples and is targeted towards First Nations and Metis people living in Brandon or otherwise off-reserve, is slated to begin June 15.

"This is a really great opportunity for people to enter the health care field and exit with a well paid job and a very rewarding career." said Karen Hargreaves, dean of health and human services at ACC. "This is an incredible prospect if you're looking for a career in health care," Hargreaves added.

"There is an abundance of jobs in this field." "Health care aides are an essential part of our health care system, and we employ many CHCA grads from ACC," said Larissa Kominko, recruitment supervisor at Prairie Mountain Health. "There is a huge demand for people who want to make a positive difference for people in need."

Since the program is starting next month, people who are interested in registering for the program should attend an information session May 25 from 6-10 p.m. in Room 253 of the Victoria Avenue East campus.

At the session, potential students will be expected to write their CAAT-C. Graduates of this program will be eligible to receive a block credit transfer of 15 credit's to ACC's Practical Nursing Program.

Direct Link: <http://www.brandonsun.com/breaking-news/ACC-announces-free-health-care-aid-course-303078351.html?thx=y>

Could Canada's First Nations resist a superbug onslaught?

Winnipeg writer explores reversal of history where European-Canadians, not First Nations, wiped out by disease

By Don Marks, [for CBC News](#) Posted: May 10, 2015 5:00 PM CT Last Updated: May 10, 2015 5:00 PM CT



Antibiotic resistance poses a real threat to the fate of the human species.

They say "what goes around, comes around."

This could very well be true for the estimated 100 million indigenous people who were wiped out by diseases that Europeans brought to the Americas more than 500 years ago.

Most of the descendents of survivors, including those here in Canada, live in poverty. Wouldn't it be ironic if those very conditions create massive death for those who came here from foreign lands?

There is indeed a set of circumstances in which this could take place.

Alexander Fleming has warned humankind about this ever since he discovered penicillin in 1928.

Prior to this discovery, a small scrape could get infected with bacteria and grow from a scabby sore to a massive infection that could cause the loss of limb and life.

'Patients shouldn't enter a hospital for a hangnail and come out with a toe tag.' - *Don Marks*

The problem is that while most bacteria are killed off during a typical treatment, some survive and develop resistances.

We develop an antibody for the new bacteria, but now there is a strain that is resistant to both antibiotics. Fleming warned that we must be careful how we deploy antibiotics because their very use often causes us to require new and different antibiotics.

Unfortunately, humankind has done the exact opposite — especially in recent times. Our need to meet the demand for low-cost, high-volume agricultural products has vastly accelerated the proliferation of antibiotic-resistant bacteria as a result of us adding antibiotics to animal feed and plant fertilizers.

We want the greatest volume of beef, pork and poultry products, so we raise cattle, pigs and chicken in crowded factory farms surrounded by their own waste and disease. This is how we provide enough wings for a million Grey Cup parties where Uncle Buck is inhaling them two at a time.

We prevent these animals from getting sick by adding antibiotics to their feed. But we are also developing bacteria that are immune to existing treatments and we are introducing these bacteria to the food chain.

Bacteria can also destroy crops, so we include antibiotics in the fertilizers that flood our lands.

We use antibiotics in hand lotions and mops, wallpaper and house paint. We have squandered the miracle discovery of penicillin by using it willy-nilly.

Darwinian battleground

It's a Darwinian battleground where only the strong survive, carrying their immunity in their genetic code that increases steadily with each new antibiotic du jour — until the day that a nightmare, pan-bacteria arrives.



Don Marks says Cattle are given antibiotics through their feed to prevent illness, but they also are becoming more susceptible to infections from antibiotic-resistant bacteria. (Adrian Wyld/Canadian Press)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta have already found 15 strains of bacteria for which there are no effective antibodies. Fortunately, they are under control through quarantines.

But they can bust loose. The most glaring example was an outbreak in one of North America's most prestigious hospitals, the National Institute of Health in Bethesda, Md. in

2010. Nineteen patients became infected with pan-resistant KPC (*Klebsiella pneumoniae carbapenemase*) and nine lost their lives.

There are too many specific examples of hospital outbreaks to list (four per cent of short-stay hospitals and 18 per cent of long-term stay hospitals had to deal with pan bacteria in 2012. Two million patients worldwide were infected that year, with 19,000 dying).

While these numbers still seem small, the rise in resistant bacteria and the decrease in effective antibiotics are an intertwined force that is expanding and becoming increasingly more dangerous day by day. If or when the right strain of deadly bacteria inevitably develops, the results will be catastrophic.

We cannot isolate and quarantine millions of people.

Hospitals are susceptible to outbreaks because infectious bacteria are brought in for treatment every day. Patients shouldn't enter a hospital for a hang nail and come out with a toe tag.

The perfect breeding ground is the general environment in third-world countries where rampant poverty creates overcrowded and unsanitary conditions.

Tourists shouldn't have to worry about visiting other countries and bringing back a superbug that wipes out every one of their countrymen.

Ultimate irony

First Nations in Manitoba, where 20 to 25 people share one house and slop pails are still commonly used, are also highly susceptible to infectious bacteria.

The ultimate irony would be for First Nations people to develop immunities to a new superbug because of increased exposure, while other Canadian citizens do not.

One can imagine a complete reversal of history as Euro-Canadians are nearly wiped out by rapidly spreading new diseases.

The Sioux prophet Wovoka once had a vision of a Ghost Dance where dead relatives of the Sioux Nation would rise out of the ground to join the living once again. The dancers wore shirts that could not be penetrated by bullets fired by the U.S. Cavalry. The Ghost Dance prophecy effectively ended with the Wounded Knee Massacre in 1890.

But one can imagine the antibodies First Nations people develop against a new superbug as the ghost shirt once envisioned by Wovoka — antibodies the whites do not have.

The real problem, however, is that the proliferation of pan-resistant bacteria, which can wipe out the human species, is much closer to reality.

Don Marks is a Winnipeg writer.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/could-canada-s-first-nations-resist-a-superbug-onslaught-1.3068582>

Aboriginal History

Cuthand: First Nations vets' contribution in wars huge

By Doug Cuthand, The Starphoenix May 8, 2015



Doug Cuthand

Today marks the 70th anniversary of V-E Day. This anniversary of the Victory in Europe brings back memories of the veterans I knew and with whom I have worked.

I was a vice chief in the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations for five years and one of my assignments was to assist the veterans organize. Saskatchewan Indians had been signing up and going to war since the First World War, but the real change came during the Second World War.

Our people signed up in record numbers and their involvement was a watershed event.

In the First World War, 107 First Nations individuals enlisted. At that time there were an estimated 10,000 First Nations people in Saskatchewan. By 1939 our population had grown to around 20,000, and following the Second World War the Department of Indian Affairs listed 443 First Nations individuals who had enlisted, of whom 27 were killed in action.

First Nations people made a significant contribution in both world wars. We held an organizing meeting at the Lebreton School in Fort Qu'Appelle in November 1981. In addition, we had a Remembrance Day ceremony. More than 100 Second World War veterans attended, and were joined by veterans from Korea and peacetime duty. Among the attendees was Albert No Name from Piapot, who was a survivor of Dieppe. I remember Joe Ewak from Whitebear, who was captured and survived several years in German prisoner of war camps.

Some enlisted at the beginning of the war and went through D-Day, Belgium, Holland and Germany without getting so much as a scratch. Alex Frank from Little Pine and Henry Langin from Cote were two examples.

I also found that there is a sense of brotherhood among soldiers. The vets told me that when they took German soldiers as prisoners, all they wanted was for the war to be done so they could go home. They felt the same as the Canadian soldiers.

Soldiers on all sides place their lives in others' hands. As Tennyson wrote in the Charge of the Light Brigade at the Battle of Balaclava during the Crimean War, "Theirs not to reason why, theirs but to do and die."

One time, an enemy soldier captured by First Nations soldiers thought he would be killed. He cried and showed them pictures of his wife and children. They simply took him

prisoner. Somewhere in Germany, some family has the story of the Indians who saved their grandfather's life. V-E Day was a day of celebrations throughout Britain, Canada and the Commonwealth; however, the Indian veterans told me they didn't celebrate in that manner. They shook hands and congratulated each other for surviving the war. They felt a sense of relief rather than jubilation.

Gordon Akenakew from Ahtahkakoop told me that they were standing and talking when one of their comrades fell to the ground, dead. He had been hit by a German sniper who was hiding in the hills, still intent on fighting the war. The war just didn't come to an end abruptly, with remnants of the German army determined to fight on.

There was no celebration, just the sense of a job well done. They left behind too many dead in the war cemeteries in Europe. The veterans told me they were exhausted. They left behind the noise and violence of the battlefields, but carried with them the memories of fallen comrades or enemy soldiers they killed or wounded.

Many would suffer from post traumatic stress thinking of someone they killed. Some had nightmares from working on burial detail or the liberation of Nazi death camps.

Their trip home was anticlimactic. The veterans told me they went back to their reserves and were Indians again. The fact that they had been heroes in Europe and liberated several countries counted for little, as they returned to the stifling life on the reserves.

The married men discovered that the Indian agent had taken their pay and handed it out to their wives like children receiving an allowance. Veterans' benefits were administered by the Department of Indian Affairs, and assistance was given or denied on the whim of the agent. Many veterans who spoke out were denied benefits. Of the 416 First Nations soldiers who survived the war, only 249 qualified for veterans benefits.

Others returned to school and found work off the reserve. David Knight from Muskoday worked for Indian Affairs, was a chief of the FSIN and helped found the Saskatoon Indian Metis Friendship Centre. He was later honoured with having a crescent in Silverwood named after him.

A few years ago a friend of mine toured some of the cemeteries in Holland. His reaction was that he was shocked to discover that most of the dead were, in his words "Canadian farm boys" between the ages of 17 to 25.

We traditionally remember the fallen soldiers on Remembrance Day. This V-E Day remember that victory came at a terrible price, and the war graves in Europe are a constant reminder.

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/life/First+Nations+vets+contribution+wars+huge/11039713/story.html>

Study undermines narrative of B.C. First Nations as simple hunter-gatherers

By Geordon Omand, The Canadian Press May 11, 2015 7:30 AM



Simon Fraser University student Misha Puckett and Louie Wilson (Cape Mudge Band and Hakai Institute) excavate a shell midden associated with a clam garden that was built on a bedrock outcrop in a 2013 handout photo. Much of the large village associated with this clam garden relied on the food from the associated clam garden beaches.

VANCOUVER - The discovery of an expansive system of historic clam gardens along the Pacific Northwest coast is contributing to a growing body of work that's busting long-held beliefs about First Nations as heedless hunter-gatherers.

A team of researchers at Simon Fraser University has revealed that First Nations from Alaska to Washington state were marine farmers using sophisticated cultivation techniques to intensify clam production.

In an article published recently in the journal *American Antiquity*, lead author Dana Lepofsky argued that the findings counter the perception of First Nations living passively as foragers in wild, untended environments.

"Once you start calling someone a hunter-gatherer there's something implied ... about not really being connected to the land or sea and not needing much from it," she said.

"Even if they aren't formal agricultural plots in the way that Europeans recognized, they were still cultivating the landscape."

Lepofsky said the "pervasive" idea that First Nations were hunter-gatherers made it easier for colonists to justify taking over the land because the resource management differed from traditional European methods.

Researchers have concluded the clam gardens dated back more than 1,000 years, and Lepofsky said she strongly believes some were more than 3,000 years old.

She said First Nations applied sophisticated management techniques to mimic ideal clam-growing conditions, including using stone terraces and sediments at appropriate elevations in the tidal column.

Sustainable practices, such as periodically turning over the soils and harvesting selectively, would have emerged to sustain the enormous populations of First Nations believed to have inhabited the coast, Lepofsky said.

She estimated that number to be in the hundreds of thousands.

Much of the scientific evidence for such practices confirmed knowledge already contained in First Nations songs and stories, said Kim Recalma-Clutesi, of the Qualicum First Nation on eastern Vancouver Island.

"It's astounding that it's taken a whole team of scientists and more than 150 years to figure this out, that our people weren't standing there with a frying pan in their hand waiting for a sockeye to jump in," she said.

Besides culturally modified beaches dotting the coastline, Recalma-Clutesi referenced complex estuary root gardens and the transplanting, fertilizing and pruning of berry

bushes as other historic examples of resource management used by indigenous peoples in the region.

She also noted that colonizing governments concluded First Nations did not need a land base because of their supposed hunter-gatherer status.

As for the clam gardens, Oregon-based researcher Doug Deur said the First Nations marine practice was either ignored, misinterpreted or sometimes even systematically excluded, particularly when there were competing land claims in an area.

"The clam gardens are one of many examples of traditional land management ... that slipped through the cracks," Deur said.

Still, he warned of using a purely western perspective to interpret the practice.

"Even while we're celebrating these technologies as interesting, potent, sophisticated, we still don't want to totally look at them through this western lens," he said, adding that's what "got us in trouble" in the past.

"That just sort of reduces them to another form of economic output."

University of Victoria-based ethno-ecologist Nancy Turner suggested the idea of First Nations as foragers has endured for so long because of what she called the pristine wilderness myth.

"A lot of people, even conservationists, we have a nostalgic view ... of an area where nature was thriving without the influence of humans," she said.

"So that does persist in society today in general of the noble, First Nations savage, living with nature without changing nature."

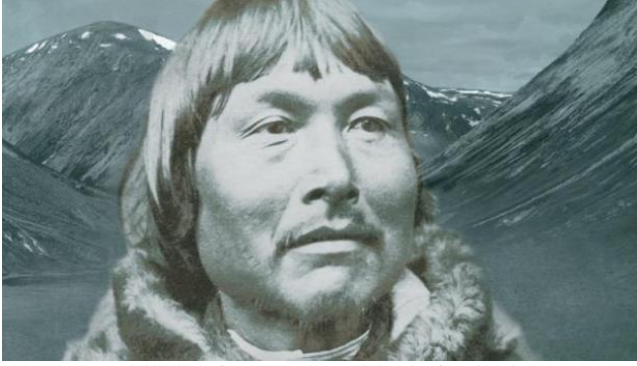
Direct Link:

<http://www.vancouversun.com/technology/Study+undermines+narrative+First+Nations+simple+hunter+gatherers/11046587/story.html>

Remains of Abraham Ulrikab may be returned to Labrador

Ulrikab kept diary of his time in Europe in Inuktitut, died of smallpox

[CBC News](#) Posted: May 13, 2015 9:15 AM CT Last Updated: May 13, 2015 9:22 AM CT



Abraham Ulrikab left Labrador with his family in the late 1800s, travelling across Europe as part of a human zoo. The Nunatsiavut government is currently consulting with Labrador Inuit on whether to bring his remains back to Canada. (Polar Horizons)

An Inuit man who died more than a century ago is one step closer to returning home, as the Nunatsiavut government looks at ways to bring the remains of Abraham Ulrikab back to Labrador.

In 1880, Ulrikab and his family were brought to Hamburg, Germany, as part of a human zoo — one of many Nunatsiavummiut families enticed away from their homes in the late 19th and early 20th century. While abroad in Europe, the entire family died of smallpox.

"It's a story all Inuit are interested in, and a sad story," says Dave Lough, Nunatsiavut's Deputy Minister of Culture. "We're looking at this particular case, of Abraham... It's complex and it involves a number of issues."

While in Europe, Ulrikab kept a journal in his native language of Inuktitut. The diary revealed that weeks after arriving, Ulrikab and his family expressed a desire to return home to Labrador.

The whereabouts of Ulrikab's remains were unknown until 2014, when writer France Rivet determined that they were in the French Natural History Museum, in Paris, during research for her book, [*In the footsteps of Abraham Ulrikab*](#).



Abraham Ulrikab poses with his family. Ulrikab kept a diary of his journey across Europe. In it, he says his family regretted their decision to leave home weeks after heading across the Atlantic Ocean. (Moravian Archives/Herrnhut, Germany)

Museum Collections Director Michel Guiraud says that they stand at the ready to return the remains of Ulrikab to the Labrador Inuit, and the Canadian and French governments have said they will assist.

First, however, the Nunatisavut government will hold public consultations on whether to bring the remains home. Lough says those consultations will include speaking with Ulrikab's living relatives.

"It's important the communities be consulted," says Lough. "And make a decision as to what is in the best interests of the families and Labrador Inuit."

The consultations should be done by September, says Lough, but he says whatever the outcome, the Nunatsiavut Government has one goal: "To rectify those wrongs, and bring closure to some sad stories."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/remains-of-abraham-ulrikab-may-be-returned-to-labrador-1.3072310>

A forgotten history: tracing the ties between B.C.'s First Nations and Chinese workers

Justine Hunter

Hope, B.C. — The Globe and Mail

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Last updated Saturday, May. 09 2015, 1:02 PM EDT



Gabriel Yiu, left, Jenny Kwan, MLA for Vancouver-Mount Pleasant, centre; and Bill Chu, founder of the Canadians For Reconciliation Society stand at the end of a CPR tunnel, which abounded during construction. (John Lehmann/The Globe and Mail)

Forgotten ties

First Nations people and Chinese immigrants have enjoyed a symbiotic relationship since before B.C. joined Confederation. Now, archeologists are chronicling this chapter of history by documenting sites where the two communities lived together.

Justine Hunter reports

A train's whistle echoes in an unfinished, abandoned railway tunnel near the banks of the Fraser River. In the quiet after the freight cars rattle past the entrance, the sound of dripping water in the dark cavern is amplified. Hundreds of Chinese railway workers died building the Canadian Pacific Railway through this treacherous terrain and it's easy to grasp, in this haunting space, the perils of blasting through the granite with notoriously unstable dynamite.

The CPR archives yield no answers about why the workers abandoned this tunnel in favour of a route through the surrounding marshes, but the stories of the men who toiled on the railway in this region in the 1880s are preserved by local First Nations. That the Sto:lo remember the Chinese dead is a testament to bonds of friendship that are older than the province of British Columbia.

Bill Chu recently visited the tunnel near Hope, clambering over rocks and thick timber support beams that have fallen after more than a century of neglect, his way blocked about 100 metres in by a collapsed heap of boulders. The Sto:lo have described to him events of catastrophic explosions, recollections of Chinese bodies plowed under in mass graves. The story of this tunnel, however, is lost.



Jenny Kwan and Bill Chu look over medal rod April 27, 2015 used for shoring in an old CPR tunnel. (John Lehmann/The Globe and Mail)

Before the railway, before British Columbia joined Confederation, many Chinese were already here. They were farming, mining and logging. They arrived by the hundreds starting in 1858 at the start of the gold rush, and Henry Yu, a professor of history at the University of B.C., says some arrived almost 200 years ago on what is now Vancouver Island. To succeed and survive, the Chinese forged relationships with the province's First Nations who also faced extreme discrimination by the white colonists.

"The Chinese dealt in reciprocal ways with First Nations. They didn't take, they asked. They brought gifts, they shared foods. They did relationship-building," said Prof. Yu, who is now helping the provincial government on a project that will see a string of Chinese historic sites in the province officially preserved and recognized.

An estimated 15,000 Chinese men worked on the railway in B.C. in the 1880s. They were paid half the wages of the white workers, got no medical care and were typically assigned the most dangerous jobs. Once the work was complete, the European settlers sought to drive the Chinese workers out of the province with a race-based Head Tax. The Chinese were regarded as the temporary foreign workers of their time – with the last spike in place, they were no longer wanted here.

"There is a long history that has been distorted, deliberately suppressed, or erased," said Prof. Yu.

The most concrete remnants of that history are found on the banks of the Fraser River. There, the Chinese built elaborate gold-mining operations among the First Nations communities. Sometimes, the men stayed and married into those communities.



Bill Chu, founder of the Canadians For Reconciliation Society, and Bill Paul, a member of the Lytton First Nation, look over the remains of a metal band used on wooden steam trunk on the banks of the Fraser River. (John Lehmann/The Globe and Mail)

The Sto:lo people have their place names that mark this shared history. "Sxwóxwiymelh" is a place where a large number of Chinese railway workers died of the flu. They call the rolling hills opposite the mouth of the Coquihalla River "Lexwpopeleqwith'aim" – it means "always screech owls" but the word took on a dual meaning as a reference to the

ghosts of Chinese workers who are said to haunt the area where many were killed during a blasting accident.

Mr. Chu is an accidental, amateur historian of British Columbia, drawn into the stories of the early Chinese railway workers and gold miners through his activism on behalf of Canada's First Nations. He came to Canada from Hong Kong in 1974. As a newcomer, he knew nothing about the role of the Chinese in building this province.

"We are not all 'new Canadians' – we are as old as this province," Mr. Chu said. Travelling up and down the Fraser Canyon, Mr. Chu has gathered stories of the Chinese railway workers kept by Sto:lo elders and others. He has visited many of the gold-mining operations that are still evident. "We are learning the history of this country from the mouths of its indigenous people," he noted.

Sonny McHalsie is a Sto:Lo historian who has worked with archeologists seeking the unmarked Chinese graves that his elders have recorded.

"A lot of Sto:lo families here have Chinese ancestry," he said. "My dad told me after the gold rush, the Chinese remained. They extracted gold off the river." The First Nations drove off white gold miners in what is known as the Fraser Canyon War, but the Chinese, based on their respectful relationship, carried on mining.

The remnants of their organized and skilled labour are still visible. There are deep troughs, tidy hills of rocks sorted by size, lengthy sluices that diverted rivers to separate the gold, and stone-walled buildings.



Bill Paul, a member of the Lytton First Nation, holds up a shovel left behind by Chinese miners in the 1800s along the banks of the Fraser River. (John Lehmann/The Globe and Mail)

Geographer Michael Kennedy researched a 130-kilometre-long stretch in the upper canyons of the Fraser River between Lytton and Big Bar to determine the extent of the placer mining, mostly by Chinese and First Nations workers.

“Taken together, they are perhaps the largest surviving ‘artifact’ of early-modern British Columbia,” he wrote in his account of his studies.

The settlements of the Nlaka’pamux people and the Chinese miners are also intermingled. The architecture of their traditional pit houses seem to be mimicked in some of the Chinese settlements.

Bill Paul is a member of the Lytton First Nation – the largest of the Nlaka’pamux communities. On a warm spring day, he led a group to a former Chinese camp where he has found Chinese coins dating back to the 1600s. However, the fragments of daily life – metal tools, a tin of lard, the metal band of a steamer trunk – suggest a community of hundreds of workers toiled here in the 1860s or 1870s.

Mr. Paul’s group included Mr. Chu and Jenny Kwan, the NDP MLA for Vancouver-Mount Pleasant and federal NDP candidate for Vancouver East. Mr. Paul led them down a steep trail, through a pine forest dotted with wild cherry trees and Saskatoon berry bushes, to the banks of the Fraser. There, he pointed out waterways, the outlines of stone buildings and, possibly, graves.

Mr. Paul once spent a week clearing one of the water ditches used in the mine operations, just to see how the system worked. “It was exhilarating to me, to see what they would have seen.”



Bill Paul, a member of the Lytton First Nation, stands in an area mined by the Chinese and the home of a former Chinese miner on banks of the Fraser River. (John Lehmann/The Globe and Mail)

Ms. Kwan believes sites like this deserve an archeological assessment and preservation.

“The significance is not just the physical structure or the artifacts themselves, but the lived history,” she said. “It is a beautiful story we need to know and to honour. ... How, in the face of hardship, these beautiful relationships were created. That bond is part of the rich history we have in British Columbia. I feel so fortunate that the Chinese community,

faced with extreme discrimination at that time, found friendship and support from the aboriginal communities.”

Earlier this year, the provincial government invited the public to nominate sites of historic importance to the province’s Chinese community. About 80 sites have been nominated but only ten will be chosen. The list of nominated sites will be released on May 15 – one year after the province formally apologized to Chinese Canadians for historic wrongs.

Teresa Wat, the minister responsible for multiculturalism, joined a similar tour with Mr. Chu several years ago when she was a journalist. Like Mr. Chu, the long-standing relationship between the Chinese and First Nations was not part of her history lessons when she came to Canada in the 1980s. “It was an eye-opener for me,” she said.

Ms. Wat’s effort to recognize these historic sites is part of a broader effort by her government to make amends for the B.C. Legislature’s role in discriminating against the Chinese. At least three of the proposed sites have been nominated by First Nations communities, giving the government an opportunity to honour this early example of relationship-building – one that requires no apologies.

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/chinese-heritage/article24335611/>

Aboriginal Identity & Representation

Nunavut Tunngavik wants more federal funding for Inuktitut

Nunavut language commissioner says funding has stayed the same for 10 years

[CBC News](#) Posted: May 11, 2015 4:22 AM CT Last Updated: May 11, 2015 4:22 AM CT



'[Inuktitut] to be used more in work places and even homes: that's what we're aiming to work on for the future and our government needs to take this more seriously' said NTI vice-president James Eetoolook.

A Nunavut land claims organization is not satisfied with the recent language program funding received from the federal government.

The territory received \$1.1 million for Inuktitut and \$1.6 million for French. The funding supports areas like health, early childhood programs and communications.

"We have to be concerned," said James Eetoolook, vice-president of Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. "Why is the Inuktitut language taken with very limited funding? Smaller than any other language?"

He said it's not fair because more Inuit live in Nunavut than French speakers and Inuktitut is in danger because more kids are speaking English.

"We all know that English and French are the official languages of Canada" he said. "Don't forget the Inuktitut language is one of the official languages recognized in our area."

Nunavut Languages Commissioner Sandra Inuitiq shares Eetoolook's concerns. She said federal funding for Inuktitut language programs has been the same for 10 years.

She said there needs to be more equitable funding for Inuit language programs because language loss is accelerating.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/nunavut-tunngavik-wants-more-federal-funding-for-inuktitut-1.3068682>

Aboriginal candidate Katherine Swampy runs against racism, hate

One person told her to 'quit trying to turn Alberta into a reserve'

[CBC News](#) Posted: May 12, 2015 6:00 AM MT Last Updated: May 12, 2015 3:30 PM MT



Aboriginal candidate Katherine Swampy said she received a dozen racist messages each day during the provincial election campaign. (Courtesy Katherine Swampy)

Katherine Swampy has run up against racism all her life.

The 29-year-old university graduate grew up at Maskwacis, a First Nation community that serves four reserves south of Edmonton.

"It's nothing new. I'm aboriginal. I look aboriginal."

But when she stepped forward to run in the provincial election for the NDP, she was truly shocked by the racism she encountered.

"It started right from the get-go," she said. "As soon as I started my campaign, I started getting e-mails, I started getting Facebook mail, text messages, and just people — all out, just rude, ignorant behaviour — telling me they didn't want to vote for me because I was native."

One person told her to "quit trying to turn Alberta into a reserve," she said.



Drayton Valley-Devon NDP candidate Katherine Swampy casts her ballot. (Courtesy of APTN)

While some people in the Drayton Valley-Devon constituency closed their doors in her face, others told her they supported the NDP, they wanted to vote NDP, but would not vote for "an Indian."

"I was quickly reminded there are still people out there who are ignorant and arrogant, and it's a shame."

In fact, she said, sometimes was hard to tell who were her supporters and who were the racists.

The comment that hit her hardest was posted on her Facebook page.

"It said, 'I support Katherine Swampy and I support the NDP. It's just too bad she has a higher chance of turning up missing than she does of winning this constituency.'"

"That one really struck a nerve," she said, describing how a childhood friend had been murdered in Calgary just months before.

Swampy said she kept the comments to herself, only talking about the racism once the campaign was over.

"I didn't want to focus the campaign on something like that," she said.

She estimated she received more than a dozen racist social media comments every day, but refused to let the comments, the snubs, the hate get to her.

"I did my best to keep composure. It was hard. It really was."

And while the number of supportive messages far outweighed the negative, near end of the campaign, in the last days before the election, it all got to her, she said.

"I did shed a few tears, I admit."

Then she thought of her supporters, especially the young women — indigenous and non-indigenous — who messaged that she inspired them.

Swampy intends to prove the haters wrong by running in the same riding for the federal NDP in the next election.

The economics major said she knows how to read a balance sheet, and while she may be what some people fear, she's the inspiration for so many more.

"This is something that we should be looking forward to," she said. "To see aboriginal leaders leading more than just their communities."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/aboriginal-candidate-katherine-swampy-runs-against-racism-hate-1.3070112>

Nunavut-Ottawa deal should beef up Inuktitut funding: language watchdog

“The federal government has a direct responsibility to redress the Inuit language situation in Nunavut”

THOMAS ROHNER, May 12, 2015 - 1:30 pm



Nunavut Languages Commissioner Sandra Inutiq says an historic deal which ensures French services are delivered in Nunavut to comply with the federal Official Languages Act should be expanded to promote more Inuktitut. (FILE PHOTO)

Federal money for the promotion of French and Inuit languages in Nunavut, recently renewed by a ratified agreement between Ottawa and the Government of Nunavut for the 2014-15 fiscal year, does not reflect Nunavut's population or needs, the territory's languages commissioner said in a May 8 news release.

“These amounts have not substantially changed in over 10 years, funds for Inuit language have stayed the same,” Sandra Inutiq said in the release.

“We need more equitable funding for the Inuit language, and funding for the French language that reflects the needs of that community.”

Leona Aglukkaq, minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Development Agency, announced May 6 that [an agreement had been ratified](#) giving Nunavut about \$2.7-million for language promotion this year: \$1.625-million for the French language, and \$1.1-million for Inuit languages.

That amounts to \$4,000 per French-speaking person in Nunavut, and only \$40 per Inuit-language speakers in Nunavut, Inutiq told *Nunatsiaq News* May 11.

“If the majority of the population... speaks the Inuit language, why do we not receive the same per capita amount of funding?” Inutiq said.

That’s not to say the French language should not receive federal funding in Nunavut, Inutiq added.

“The Aboriginal languages amounts have always been lower than the Francophone amounts, and it’s always been a point of contention,” she said.

Federal funding for language promotion in the Northwest Territories began in the mid-1980s after the Supreme Court of Canada ruled territories were bound by the federal Official Languages Act — meaning French and English have official status in the territories.

“The federal government tried to unilaterally legislate the official languages [in the 1980s] and there was a huge reaction from the Aboriginal community, saying, ‘what about our languages?’,” Inutiq said.

With the Constitution Act of 1982 enshrining language and education rights of minority groups, negotiations began between Ottawa and Aboriginal communities on how to implement — and who would pay for — the Official Languages Act, Inutiq said.

As a result, Ottawa agreed to pay for the implementation of the federal languages act in order to equalize French service delivery in the territories. It also agreed to fund the promotion of Aboriginal languages as part of that deal.

Nunavut adopted that agreement from the NWT when it became a territory.

“The federal government has a direct responsibility to redress the Inuit language situation in Nunavut because of their role in assimilation policies of the past,” Inutiq said in the release.

That situation includes “an acceleration of [Inuit] language loss” leading to an “urgent” and “shared” responsibility to protect the Inuit language, Inutiq said.

But negotiations between Ottawa and the GN’s department of culture and heritage have stalled, Inutiq said.

“I know they’ve stalled because I asked the department why the same agreement continues, when it clearly does not seem to be fair in terms of the language makeup of Nunavut. I was told the GN has been pushing for more equitable funds.”

Funding per capita should at least be equal between French and Inuit language speakers, Inutiq said.

And the funding announced last week by Aglukkaq only relates to services provided by the GN — not to education or other areas of language promotion, she added.

“What we need to do is look at language rights, promotion, revitalization and protection as a whole, and what we want to achieve, rather than splitting it into different pockets of money where it detracts from the larger objectives we’re trying to achieve.”

If Nunavummiut are concerned about the larger objectives of keeping the Inuit language vital, Inutiq urged them to write to their member of Parliament.

The Office of the Languages Commissioner mostly handles complaints filed by those who feel their language rights have been violated, for example in services received from the GN.

But her office also advocates for equality in language rights, Inutiq said.

It’s not very often the OLC issues a statement in response to a political announcement. The last time her office issued a statement of this sort was in 2013 when Prime Minister Stephen Harper visited Iqaluit.

“If the federal government is genuine in their interest in economic development and social progress for Nunavut, then language revitalization and protection must be properly funded,” Inutiq said, back in 2013.

The Department of Culture and Heritage administers the federal funds for language promotion. In 2014/15, the department allocated over 40 per cent of its budget, around \$11-million, towards [promoting and coordinating laws and regulations](#) around Nunavut’s official languages.

However Inutiq pointed out that the [landmark settlement](#) recently signed between Ottawa and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., which avoided a \$1-billion lawsuit filed by NTI, did little to address the lack of federal funding for languages in Nunavut.

“There wasn’t anything specifically on language in the agreement, so it continues to be an unresolved issue with the federal government.”

Direct Link: http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674nunavut-ottawa_language_deal_should_beef_up_inuktitut_funding/

In Canada, aboriginal pastors mix Christianity with Native spirituality

Aboriginal pastors are mixing faiths to help parishioners grapple with a legacy of mistreatment

May 14, 2015 5:00AM ET

by [Gian-Paolo Mendoza](#) [@gplomacy](#)

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — Inside a cramped, run-down loft in one of this city's poorest neighborhoods, Cheryl Bear Barnettson sits at a communal drum, leading a group of people in song.

The sharp beating of the drum grows louder and faster. She and the other aboriginal singers surrounding it begin to chant.

“Jeeee-sus, Jeeee-sus, Jeeee-sus ...”

Although it doesn't look like a typical house of worship, this place is a church. Bare brick walls surround small coffee tables and chairs. A large wooden cross is all that distinguishes the space from a 1920s speakeasy.

Barnetson is one of the pastors who minister here every Sunday night. Using traditional aboriginal practices, they share the gospel with the people who walk through the doors of Street Church. They all attend for their own reasons — some for religion, others for a free meal.

To the right of the stage, an aboriginal man plays a hand drum along with the congregation. After the song is finished, she says, “We're all here for Jesus tonight.” The man abruptly stands, takes his drum and walks loudly down the creaking stairs, shouting profanities.

His reaction does not surprise Barnettson — she knows that churches once played a central role in suppressing and attacking aboriginal culture in Canada — nor is she concerned. As the man walks out the door alone, 50 or so people are lined up waiting to get in.



Cheryl Bear Barnetson (center right) addresses a drum circle. GP Mendoza

According to the 2001 census, 50 percent of aboriginal respondents in Canada highly value both traditional Native spirituality and Christianity. Barnetson is one of them. She practices a style of Christianity known as contextualization, which attaches biblical meaning to traditional ceremonies and practices. Her hand drum, for example, is used in Nadleh Whu-ten culture for clan songs and community ceremonies, but she plays it to share the story of Christ. She also integrates Christianity and Native spirituality on a larger level. Under her leadership, the Foursquare Church of Canada, a Pentecostal denomination, developed a ministry to target aboriginal worshippers. Street Church is part of that.

She traces contextualization to the 1990s, when a number of organizations in the U.S. began focusing on how aboriginal Christian leaders could incorporate traditional Native practices into modern church services. In 1996 a handful of these groups held the first World Christian Gathering of Indigenous People in New Zealand. The event came with a clear message: Many aboriginal and indigenous peoples around the world were choosing to be a part of evangelical churches, and they wanted their cultures to be accepted within them.

“It was really a neat time for me as a Native person,” Barnetson remembers. “For the first time in my life, I felt like I could be both Native and Christian at the same time and not feel like there was something bad about me.”

The relationship between aboriginals and the church has historically been a difficult one. She remembers an encounter that took place when she was a young adult. “One day I was going to school, and I had my backpack on,” she says. “I was walking out of our building in Native housing, and an elder stopped me and said, ‘Hey, you’re going to school! Good for you, what school you going to?’”

Barnetson told him that she was going to Bible college. “Right away his face changed, and he said, ‘How could you go there after what they did to our people?’” She pauses. “That question hit me very deeply because I know what it means, and I get it.”

The elder was referring to the [long and violent relationship](#) between Christian churches and Canada's indigenous peoples. For more than a century starting in the mid-1880s, the federal government partnered with the Catholic, Anglican, United, Presbyterian and Methodist churches to run more than 130 Indian residential schools. These were government-funded boarding schools that removed aboriginal children from their families and forced them to assimilate. Over 100,000 Native children attended these schools until the last one was closed in 1996. Tens of thousands of residential students were verbally, physically and sexually abused during this time. They were taught that traditional spirituality was evil, and many were given Christian names or forced to have their hair cut.



Street Church is packed to the brim for a visiting aboriginal musician. GP Mendoza

In 2007, Canada established a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) as part of a court-ordered settlement to address the impact of residential schools. Among other things, the TRC provides former students an opportunity to share their experiences during national events. The last one was held in Vancouver in 2013, and Barnettson was in attendance. She describes hearing the elders' stories of residential schools as a defining moment. "It was impossibly hard to listen. Hearing the stories from actual survivors gave me a bit of a spiritual crisis," she says. Since then, she has been devoted to repairing the relationship between aboriginal people and the church.

In accordance with Native belief, Barnettson sees healing as both a physical and a spiritual endeavor. Epidemic levels of alcoholism, family violence and substance abuse plague many aboriginal communities in Canada. One way Barnettson helps members of her church work through their problems is with ceremonies such as smudging, in which sacred substances such as tobacco or sage are burned in an abalone shell and then inhaled. In many aboriginal cultures, smudging is used to cleanse the mind, body and soul. "We have all kinds of cleansing ceremonies," she says, "and that's basically what the Bible is about as well." This approach offends some evangelical Christians, who

contend that these ceremonies have nonbiblical, pagan roots. It also bothers some traditional spiritual practitioners, who fear the integrity of Native culture is at stake.

Daniel Justice, a Cherokee author and the chairman of the First Nations and indigenous studies program at the University of British Columbia, is very aware of the power of the church in aboriginal communities. In the 2001 Canadian census, more than 60 percent of aboriginals — almost 1 million people — identified as Christian. Almost 28 percent of those identified as Protestant-evangelical. This makes him especially wary of the role churches play in reconciliation efforts with aboriginal communities. He believes that new ministries devoted to bringing aboriginal people to Christianity often replicate old patterns of colonization. “Now evangelicals are coming back in to help heal people from the traumas of residential school,” he says, “which they and their predecessors visited upon communities.”

He also sees Barnetson’s style of Christianity as a form of cultural appropriation. “Too often it’s a superficial thing,” he says. “Sitting in a circle, passing around a talking stick or using an eagle feather — none of these are superficial in and of themselves, but when they’re completely dislocated from cultural and religious contexts that they are meaningful to, they just become props.”



Christina Dawson displays one of her treasured eagle feathers.GP Mendoza

Churches are not alone in using aboriginal practices for healing. In British Columbia, there are a number of substance abuse and trauma treatment centers that offer smudging and sharing circles alongside psychotherapy. Shelley Goforth, a manager with the Alberta Health Services’ aboriginal health program, believes that Western medicine often misses the spiritual dimension of healing that exists in many Native cultures. In an [academic review](#) of healing programs, she wrote, “The key to healing from residential school abuse and its intergenerational effects lies in the area of reclaiming identity.” This, she elaborated, means “recovering traditional values, beliefs, philosophies, ideologies and approaches and adapting them to the needs of today.”

An emphasis on traditional Native values was crucial to Christina Dawson, who struggled for many years with drug and alcohol abuse before finding religion.

She is a member of the Nuu-chah-nulth nation from Vancouver Island and has been attending Street Church as a congregant for more than 10 years. She remembers the moment of her conversion: She was at Church Street one night, lining up with her husband for a hot dog when a pastor knelt beside her and she suddenly decided to make the decision. She says that the change has helped her deal with her substance problems and made her proud of her aboriginal heritage. Street Church's use of Native spirituality was part of what helped her connect with the sermons and the community. "I was really surprised, 'cause the only time I'd ever seen regalia and hand drums was at potlatches and stuff like that," she says. "But when I saw them bringing it into the church and using it for worship, it really touched my heart."

She became an ordained minister last year and now works as an assistant pastor at Street Church. After Barnetson's drum circle, Dawson finishes her Sunday sermon with a prayer and invites members of the audience to go up to the pulpit and share their stories with the congregation. One of the first people to stand is Hans Sanderson, a former residential school student from Manitoba. He tells the audience about his rough upbringing on his home reserve. "I started drinking at age 7," he says. "When I worked with my uncles, they would force me to drink beer with them." After the nuns saw how badly he and his sister were treated, the two were sent to the Guy Hill Residential School, where they encountered more abuse. He continued drinking and gambling for many years after that. When he started attending Street Church, he says, it finally affirmed his aboriginal identity. "Going to Street Church has really given me more insight as to who my people are. Before, I had never really talked about my people, about their culture and identity, about my identity as a Native person. It's developed into something I know I want to be involved in."

To Barnetson, Sanderson and Dawson are proof that her approach is working. "I think there's been an attack on Native people for hundreds of years ... this idea that being Native is not good," she says. Barnetson sees her work now as "retelling the gospel" so aboriginals "don't have to give up who we inherently are." She pauses. "For Native people, that is the most important. I think that's the key to healing."

Direct Link: <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/5/14/in-canada-aboriginal-pastors-turn-to-christianity.html>

Aboriginal Jobs & Labour

UBC Okanagan Aboriginal Career Fair Attracts over 260 students

By Global News, May 7, 2015 8:59 pm



KELOWNA – Finding a career path can be scary for high school students. Thinking about what post-secondary institution to attend is a big decision on its own. On Thursday, UBC Okanagan hosted their 21st Annual Aboriginal Career Fair to connect youth with professionals in the community.

With 44 information booths, the event attracted more than 260 Aboriginal students from all over the Okanagan. From trades to health care, and engineering – there were options for everyone.

“After I graduate, I really want to go into massage therapy and expand on that. I’ve already started taking a few courses in health care,” says Emma Cohen, a grade 11 student.

Cohen says the event is a great resource.

“The people from my community, they are my family and seeing them step out of their comfort zones and trying new things and looking for new possibility in their life, it really helps,” Cohen adds.

According to youth advocate Edna Terbasket of the Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society, the event is more than just a meet and greet. It’s about empowerment.

“Our kids do not see brown faces in a professional role. It’s important to me to try and group Aboriginal professional people in different areas — from teachers to the RCMP to all the different fields, so our kids could see a brown face and think they can do it,” says Terbasket.

Terbasket says she was involved in the very first career fair 21 years ago and seeing people from the same background breaks down challenges students can face.

But Emma Cohen says her future is bright.

“It shows that nobody is alone and we can really do anything and there’s endless possibilities,” she says.

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/1986771/ubc-okanagan-aboriginal-career-fair-attracts-over-260-students/>

Aboriginal Politics

Iqaluit councillors vote to keep opening prayers, for now

Heated debate, public opposition prompt calls for legal opinion

PETER VARGA, May 13, 2015 - 10:00 am



Iqaluit city councillor Joanasie Akumalik insisted, May 12, that the city needs a legal opinion on whether a Supreme Court of Canada ruling obligates the city to drop the opening prayer from council meetings. (PHOTO BY PETER VARGA)



Jeannie Arreak-Kullualik tells councillors May 12 that she opposed a motion to eliminate the opening prayer from council meetings. (PHOTO BY PETER VARGA)

A motion to replace a “prayer” with a moment of silence at the start of Iqaluit city council meetings died after lengthy discussion and debate in a regular meeting, May 12.

Doubts about how an April 15 Supreme Court of Canada ruling might affect Iqaluit if the city continued its procedure of saying a prayer at the start of its meetings ultimately put an end to all comment.

“I think the first question is, what does the Supreme Court of Canada do to us?” Coun. Joanasie Akumalik asked midway through a discussion.

His obvious question interrupted a heated debate: does elimination of the opening prayer threaten Inuit culture — or does the prayer exclude Iqaluit residents who are not Christian?

“If we keep the prayer in, are they [Supreme Court authorities] going to find us?” Akumalik asked fellow councillors.

“Are they going to put the councillors at BCC?” he said, referring to the Baffin Correctional Centre, Nunavut’s Iqaluit-based jail.

“I just don’t know what the Supreme Court would do to us,” he said to laughs in the council chamber, which momentarily lightened what had been heavy discussion.

The Supreme Court ruled April 15 that the Quebec town of Saguenay’s practice of opening council meetings with a Catholic prayer violates an individual’s freedom of conscience and religion.

As a result, some municipalities across Canada started to [review their tradition of reciting prayers](#) before council meetings.

A succession of major cities have since dropped the prayer including Ottawa, Niagara Falls, Fredericton, Calgary, and Edmonton.

The City of Iqaluit’s Council Procedures Bylaw actually states that each meeting must start with a “prayer,” without specifying what kind of prayer it must be.

Coun. Kenny Bell [tabled a motion](#) to drop the prayer from council meetings on May 12. His motion, seconded by Coun. Romeyn Stevenson, called for council to remove the word “prayer” from the procedures bylaw, and replace it with “a moment of silence.”

The motion died, three votes to two, with one abstention from Coun. Akumalik.

Councillors Simon Nattaq, Noah Papatsie and Stephen Mansell voted against the motion’s supporters, Bell and Stevenson. The only councillor not in attendance, Terry Dobbin, was out of the country on vacation.

“I’m going to have to abstain, because I’d like to hear some legal advice,” Akumalik said.

Bell then promptly tabled a motion “that we seek a legal opinion, to ensure that this is handled properly,” he said. Stevenson seconded the motion.

Mayor Mary Wilman noted that the city’s legal counsel is scheduled to meet with city officials on June 18.

“We can ask them to provide us with a legal opinion then,” she said.

Bell told news media after the April 28 council meeting that he would table a motion to drop the prayer. The councillor did not rise from his chair, April 28, when Akumalik delivered the prayer in Inuktitut. Nattaq normally leads the prayer, but did not attend the meeting.

Bell’s promise to table the motion at the next council meeting — and Stevenson’s promise to second the proposal — drew concern from Simon Nattaq, who threatened to resign if the motion passed.

The motion also compelled lifelong Iqaluit resident Jeannie Arreak-Kullualik to formally address council and voice her support for opening prayers at the start of the May 12 meeting.

She claimed “not all, but the majority of Inuit feel the way I do.”

“Inuit are largely silent, including me, on politics because we put a lot of trust and respect to our elected leaders,” Arreak-Kullualik told council from the delegate’s chair.

“But on this topic is where I draw the line, because it challenges every part of my being, my upbringing,” she said tearfully.

“You may see it as a religious practice, but it’s the philosophy and technical teachings behind the prayer that is of utmost importance to the Inuit and our cultural identity,” she said.

Arreak-Kullualik said praying “is a form of ancient ritual” among Inuit “to recognize, show appreciation for surviving the reality of living in a harsh environment.”

Prayer “centres ourselves as we face challenges and obstacles that we face when we have to make important decisions,” she said. “If we do not, we easily go off balance, become selfish and make the wrong decisions.

“There is Inuit wisdom in this practice, whether you are religious or not. It also brings comfort in unity, to know we are not alone, and together we can handle the most difficult things in life, and achieve more,” she said.

Inuit adopted the custom from Christian missionaries, “but the philosophy behind it [is what] Inuit are very attached to. That is why Inuit feel the prayer is our own.”

“It is one of the only fundamental practices we have not lost,” Arreak-Kullualik told council.

Coun. Stevenson admitted many residents openly oppose his stance to replace the council prayer for a moment of silence.

“Over the past two weeks I’ve been yelled at, belittled – I’ve had what I would call racist remarks directed at me, just because of this issue,” he said.

Nevertheless, he said, bylaws state that meetings must start with a Christian prayer, “and that makes our meetings biased.”

“In this city, we have Christians of all shades and all colours. We have Muslims, we have Buddhists, and atheists. We represent them all,” Stevenson said.

“How can you say to any of these groups that we’re going to make decisions that are fair, and without prejudice, but just wait outside, please, until we’re done with our prayers.

“We can’t do that. We represent all Iqalungmiut.”

Arreak-Kullualik replied that she “never meant” her own comments to be taken as racist. She said it was important for her to state her views, which council might not otherwise hear from “the ones that are silent on the issue.”

“I had to come here,” she said. “Maybe I misunderstood the intent of your motion through the media.”

Coun. Stevenson said he didn’t want the prayer issue to be raised by way of debate in council.

Coun. Mansell agreed, adding, “we should have done our policy research and our legal research before having this debate in the chamber.”

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiagonline.ca/stories/article/65674iqaluit_councillors_vote_to_keep_opening_prayers_for_now/

Perry Bellegarde says feds need to be at aboriginal affairs talks

Provincial, territorial ministers and aboriginal groups in Yellowknife to discuss quality of life gap

[CBC News](#) Posted: May 13, 2015 11:46 AM CT Last Updated: May 13, 2015 11:46 AM CT



AFN chief Perry Bellgarde addresses the media, flanked by Northwest Territories premier Bob McLeod. Bellgarde says that although he appreciates the dialogue brought forth by provincial and territorial ministers during Aboriginal Affairs working group meetings this week, he wants to see the federal government represented, as well.

Perry Bellegarde, the national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, called out the federal government at a meeting of aboriginal affairs ministers in Yellowknife Tuesday, saying they need to be present at discussions on aboriginal issues.

Bellegarde was in Yellowknife for a meeting of the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group, which includes provincial and territorial ministers of aboriginal affairs and leaders of five national aboriginal groups. The group met yesterday to discuss closing the gap between the quality of life of aboriginal and non-aboriginal people in Canada.

According to Bellegarde, the talks are a step in the right direction, but a major player continues to be absent: "the big crown," meaning the federal government.

"We get along well with the little crown," says Bellegarde, referring to the provinces and territories, "but there's a role for the federal Crown to be at these tables as well."

"It just makes sense, if we're talking about education, when we have all of the deputy ministers of education here from the provinces, we have the deputy minister from the appropriate federal department here sitting with us. So I'm going to keep calling out for that relationship to happen as well."

Established six years ago by the premiers of the provinces and territories, the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group is currently chaired by Northwest Territories premier Bob McLeod. Tuesday's meeting also included discussion of violence against aboriginal

women and girls, education, and addressing the high number of aboriginal children in care.

Recommendations from the meeting will be shared when provincial and territorial premiers meet in Happy Valley Goose Bay, Newfoundland, in July.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/perry-bellegarde-says-feds-need-to-be-at-aboriginal-affairs-talks-1.3072569>

NDP MP Blasts Aboriginal Affairs Minister's Response To On-Reserve Youth Suicides

The Huffington Post Canada | By [Ryan Maloney](#)

Posted: 05/14/2015 5:34 pm EDT Updated: 05/14/2015 6:59 pm EDT

An NDP MP erupted at the minister of aboriginal affairs Wednesday after Bernard Valcourt suggested the issue of youth suicide on reserves was not his responsibility.

The minister's remarks prompted Charlie Angus to call him a "clown."

Every spring, the Opposition gets to pick two federal departments to scrutinize on spending estimates and priorities. The meeting, which typically goes on for several hours in the House of Commons, is called a [Committee of the Whole](#).

Valcourt and his parliamentary secretary faced a grilling from Liberal MPs, NDP aboriginal affairs critic Niki Ashton, Cree NDP MP Romeo Saganash, and Angus, whose northern Ontario riding includes many First Nations communities. The [questions](#) ran the gamut from aboriginal education to drinking water safety to the much-criticized Nutrition North food subsidy.

But it was Angus' query about on-reserve suicides that sparked perhaps the most heated moment.

"Mr. Chair, I am not going to engage in silly rhetoric with the minister," Angus said. "I am going to ask him, given the horrific death rates that we have among children who do not have access to schools, if he can tell us what the national suicide rate is on reserve among young people under his watch?"

Valcourt said that the MP's assertion that "these children are under the minister's watch" demonstrated a misunderstanding about the "responsibility" of his department.

“These children are first and foremost the responsibility of their parents throughout Canada,” Valcourt said.

“That is not your responsibility?” Angus asked. “You are a clown. That man is a clown.”

Tory MP Bruce Stanton, assistant deputy chair of the committee, called Angus’ remark out of order.

“You have no clue,” Valcourt shot back.

On Thursday, Angus took to Twitter to accuse Valcourt of shrugging off suicides on reserves and [blaming parents](#).

He also shared a 15-minute YouTube clip of their exchange that ends before Angus hurled the insult.

In 2013, James Anaya, at the time the United Nations’ special rapporteur on indigenous rights, addressed the suicide crisis on aboriginal reserves at the [conclusion of his visit to Canada](#).

“The suicide rate among Inuit and First Nations youth on reserve, at more than five times greater than other Canadians, is alarming,” Anaya said.

“One community I visited has suffered a suicide every six weeks since the start of this year.”

His report, [released months later](#), highlighted gaps in First Nations housing, education, and health, and urged a national inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women.

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2015/05/14/aboriginal-affairs-bernard-valcourt-clown-charlie-angus_n_7286846.html

Valcourt unsure about details when questioned by MPs on First Nations children, youth

[National News](#) | May 14, 2015 by [APTN National News](#) | [0 Comments](#)



APTN National News

OTTAWA—When it came to detailed questions about First Nations children and youth, Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt drew blanks.

Valcourt faced questions from MPs Wednesday evening during Committee of the Whole in the House of Commons which focused on his department. Many of the questions centered on education, child welfare and youth suicide rates.

While Valcourt was more than willing to throw around large dollar figures to defend his government's handling of the Aboriginal Affairs file, the minister repeatedly came up short when faced with specific questions about issues like per capita student funding for on reserve education, literacy rates, child welfare numbers and on-reserve youth suicide rates.

At one point, a frustrated Valcourt, facing a question from an NDP MP about suicide rates, blurted that the fate of First Nations children was not the responsibility of the federal Aboriginal Affairs department.

“Given the horrific death rates that we have among children who do not have access to schools, if he can tell us what the national suicide rate is on reserve among young people under his watch?” said NDP MP Charlie Angus, whose Timmins-James Bay riding includes the communities of Attawapiskat, Kashechewan and Fort Albany.

“The assertion of the honourable member that these children are under the minister's watch shows a great misunderstanding by the member of the responsibility of the department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development,” said Valcourt. “These children are first and foremost the responsibility of their parents throughout Canada.”

The high rate of suicides in First Nation communities is widely linked to the abject poverty on many reserves, which are federal responsibility, and the continuing aftershocks of the over century-long operation of Indian residential schools, which were created by Ottawa

Angus responded with a cutting retort.

“That is not your responsibility? You are a clown. That man is a clown,” said Angus.

Valcourt also drew a blank when asked by Angus about the number of First Nations children, under 14, in the care of social services. Aboriginal Affairs, which funds on-reserve child and family services, is facing a human rights complaint over an allegation it underfunds First Nations child welfare.

Valcourt said the department has no responsibility for children in care beyond paying for the services.

“As the responsibility is delegated to agencies by the provinces, I cannot give the exact figure of the number of children who are in care tonight. These are figures that I am sure we could gather after the fact,” said Valcourt. “However, as the member knows, this responsibility is to the several agencies and the provinces that administer child welfare services on reserves where there are no agencies.”

Angus said Valcourt’s department actually keeps readily available statistics on the issue.

“Actually, I got it from the minister’s own documents. The number is 30,000 to 40,000. I think the minister does not have his facts right,” said Angus. “Does the minister not keep track of the number of children that are in care that his government is paying for?”

Valcourt said he did not check child welfare figures “every day” and repeated that the department has no obligation for child welfare beyond meeting policy requirements to fund the services.

“When the member talks about an obligation, I will remind the honourable member that this is a policy matter. This is a policy decision to reimburse provinces and to fund the agencies,” said Valcourt.

Manitoba has made national headlines over its overwhelmed child welfare system which primarily seizes First Nations children and babies. Last summer’s Winnipeg murder of Tina Fontaine, who was in the care of the province at the time of her death, revealed a broken system that housed children and youth in hotels.

Valcourt also didn’t deny a suggestion from Angus that Ottawa wants to download responsibility of on-reserve child welfare to the provinces and provincial-level agencies.

The minister, whose government has claimed First Nations education to be a priority, also drew a blank when it came to on-reserve literacy and numeracy rates for students.

“This is information that I do not have in front of me, but we could provide it to the honourable member,” said Valcourt.

“I read it in the (department’s) report,” said Angus. “It was the first time that it ever kept those numbers.”

Angus said boys in Ontario First Nations had a literacy score of 21 per cent and a numeracy score of 18 per cent.

“I do not know if the minister can name a country in the world where those rates would be lower,” said Angus.

Liberal Aboriginal affairs critic Carolyn Bennett took aim at Valcourt over the apparent drop in the number of First Nation and Inuit students accessing the post-secondary student support program. Bennett said in 1997, 22, 938 students were in the program, but that number dropped to 18,729 in 2009.

“Can the minister tell us what the current total back log for First Nations and Inuit individuals waiting for support through the post-secondary student support program is? What is the wait list backlog?” said Bennett.

Valcourt said he didn’t know because the program is administered at the band level.

“This is information that they have and we do not,” said Valcourt.

Valcourt said between 20,000 to 22,000 students were currently in the post-secondary student support program.

Valcourt also dodged a question about his department sharing information on Indigenous activist with law enforcement and intelligence agencies under the Harper government’s proposed anti-terror law. If Bill C-51 becomes law, agencies like the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and the RCMP would be able to access Indian status records, which contain geological information, and other personal information held by Aboriginal Affairs.

“(Under Bill-C51), will the department be able to proactively share information that is collected on Indigenous activists with security and intelligence agencies?” said NDP Aboriginal affairs critic Niki Ashton.

“Last time I checked, I am not responsible for public safety,” said Valcourt.

Ashton then brought up the RCMP’s apology for a comparison likening the Idle No More movement to “bacteria” made by one the force’s Aboriginal liaison officers.

“The parliamentary secretary to the minister of Public Safety said that it was absolutely abhorrent that anyone would ask the government to apologize for this kind of discriminatory language,” said Ashton. “Does the minister agree with the parliamentary secretary?”

Valcourt said the federal government did not share the bacteria view.

“Can I do more than just reiterate that the government of Canada does not share the view of that sole employee of the RCMP who has chosen to characterize the movement that way he has,” said Valcourt. “This is not the view of our government and I repeat, we think that the RCMP has appropriately apologized for the statement of that member of the RCMP.”

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/05/14/valcourt-unsure-details-questioned-mps-first-nations-children/>

NDP MP demands apology for RCMP Idle No More 'bacteria' comparison

[National News](#) | May 8, 2015 by [Jorge Barrera](#) |



Jorge Barrera

APTN National News

The NDP's Aboriginal affairs critic demanded Friday that Public Safety Minister Stephen Blaney apologize for an RCMP comparison of the [Idle No More movement to bacteria](#).

Churchill NDP MP Niki Ashton demanded the apology twice during question period.

Ashton said the bacteria comparison, made by the RCMP's Aboriginal liaison for the national capital region in a report, was “discriminatory.” She said it damaged the relationship between the federal police force and First Nations.

“Would the minister stand in this House, apologize, and clearly tell Canadians that this kind of discriminatory language toward First Nations is unacceptable?” said Ashton.

Ashton's question was fielded by Conservative MP Roxanne James, the parliamentary secretary for Public Safety, because Blaney was in Montreal. James said she found Ashton's question “abhorrent” and refused to issue any apology.

“I absolutely reject the premise of that question. Painting the RCMP in that light is absolutely unacceptable,” said James. “These are men and women who risk their lives on a day-to-day basis in order to keep Canadians safe. I find it absolutely abhorrent that she would bring that up and say that in this place.”

An internal RCMP document obtained by *APTN National News* under the Access to Information Act said the Idle No More movement was like “bacteria.” The document was a site report from Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence’s camp which was set up during her liquids-only fast on Victoria Island in the Ottawa River within sight of Parliament Hill and the Supreme Court of Canada.

The camp became a hub of activity during the height of the Idle No More movement between December 2012 and January 2013.

The site report was written by RCMP Cpl. Wayne Russett, that Aboriginal liaison for the national capital region, and sent to Insp. Mike LeSage, the acting director general for National Aboriginal Policing. LeSage passed it on to Carrie Ann McPherson, a senior analyst with the RCMP’s Operations Intelligence Analysis Section.

While the document primarily provided close to real-time details of the evolving situation inside Spence’s camp, it also included a discussion of the Idle No More movement.

“This Idle No More movement is like bacteria, it has grown a life of its own all across this nation,” wrote Russett, in the Dec. 24, 2012, document. “It may be advisable for all to have contingency plans in place, as this is one issue that is not going to go away.”

The report also struck an ominous tone.

“There is a high probability that we could see flash mobs, round dances and blockades become much less compliant to laws in an attempt to get their point across,” said the document. “The escalation of violence is ever near.”

The document was titled, “Chief Spence’s Hunger Strike and the Idle No More Movement (sic)” and classified “for law enforcement only.”

APTN filed the request under the Act in April 2013 and only recently received the documents.

The RCMP did not respond to a request for comment as of this article’s posting.

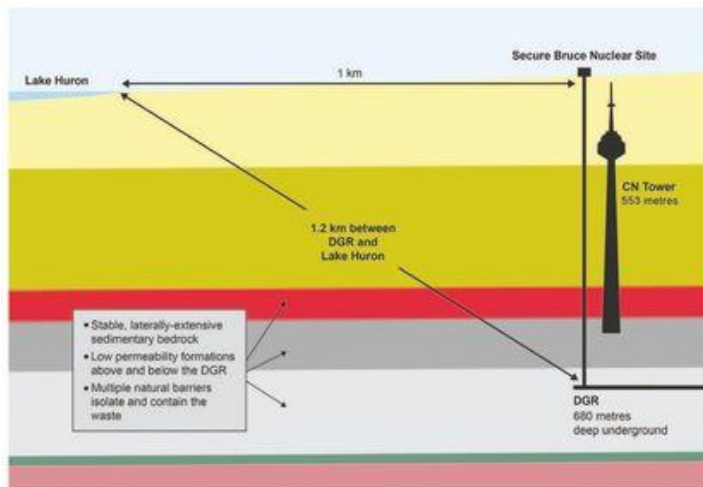
Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/05/08/ndp-mp-demands-apology-rcmp-idle-bacteria-comparison/>

Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources

First Nations oppose Ont. nuclear waste burial project

Rob Gowan, Postmedia Network

First posted: Friday, May 08, 2015 08:42 AM EDT | Updated: Friday, May 08, 2015 08:47 AM EDT



OWEN SOUND, Ont. -- A plan to bury nuclear waste near Lake Huron doesn't have the key approval of area First Nations.

"Of course we are opposed to it," Saugeen First Nation Chief Vernon Roote said Thursday. "In our community that I represent ... there are no members that are agreeable to the burial at the site at this time."

The proposal by Ontario Power Generation cleared a key hurdle this week when a federal review panel approved the plan.

OPG continued to insist Thursday approval by the Saugeen Ojibway Nation is necessary for the project to proceed.

"As we have stated in the past and we will state again, we will not build this project without SON support," OPG spokesperson Neal Kelly said.

Roote said he's concerned about possible contamination of the Great Lakes.

"If something were to happen with the disposal or the leakage of nuclear waste, I wouldn't want to be drinking the water downstream," he said. "That means the balance of Lake Huron, Lake Erie, Lake Ontario and also anyone drinking from those lakes, even into the U.S.A."

OPG wants to bury low- and intermediate-level radioactive waste from Ontario's three nuclear plants in a shaft deeper than the CN tower is tall at the Bruce nuclear site near Kincardine, Ont.

The site is in the traditional territory of the Saugeen Ojibway Nation that includes Saugeen and Chippewas of Nawash First Nations.

Chippewas of Nawash Chief Arlene Chegahno couldn't be reached for comment Thursday.

Federal Environment Minister Leona Aglukkaq has 120 days to review the environmental assessment report before deciding if she will authorize the panel to issue the licence to prepare the site for the so-called deep geological repository.

In its report, the panel concluded the project is "not likely to cause significant adverse environmental effects."

That conclusion dismayed Erika Simpson, an associate professor of international relations at Western University in London, Ont., who has written about the proposal.

"I can't understand why they can claim the science says it's permissible. The testimony, which I've read, had many scientists, many geologists, questioning the science," she said.

The review panel recommendation comes after 14 years of study and consultation, including 300 hours of public hearings. The panel also sifted through tens of thousands of pages of documents.

If built, the repository would extend 680 metres underground in rock that's 450 million years old.

Opponents, including more than 154 cities across Canada and the U.S., argued the project could menace the water supply in the Great Lakes basin, one of North America's most densely populated regions with about 40 million people.

"It's hard for me to accept the Joint Review Panel's conclusion that a site less than a mile from Lake Huron is the safest and most appropriate place to store millions of gallons of nuclear waste when they failed to even consider other potential sites," Michigan Congressman Dan Kildee said in a written statement.

OPG insists the ancient rock is the perfect site for waste burial.

While SON support has not yet been secured, Kelly said the proposal has had strong support from others locally.

But Simpson said support for the project has been influenced by the millions of dollars promised to area municipalities in a sharing agreement struck in 2004.

If Agluqqak gives the go-ahead to issue the licence, the proposal would go back to the panel to consider OPG's application to prepare the site and begin construction, which could be as early as 2018.

Construction is expected to take seven years and OPG would then need to apply to the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission for a licence to operate it.

--with files from Randy Richmond

Direct Link: <http://www.torontosun.com/2015/05/08/first-nations-oppose-ont-nuclear-waste-burial-project>

Lacklustre support from B.C. First Nations signals trouble for LNG facility

JUSTINE HUNTER

VICTORIA — The Globe and Mail

Published Sunday, May. 10 2015, 9:51 PM EDT

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In a wave, row after row, members of the Lax Kw'alaams band rose from their seats last week to vote No to the generational opportunity of liquefied natural gas. The effect of their decision could reach distant shores where investors are poised to decide if they will commit tens of billions of dollars to building an LNG industry in British Columbia.

The 3,600 members of this Tsimshian First Nation in Prince Rupert have been offered more than \$1.1-billion in exchange for their consent to the construction of the Pacific NorthWest LNG facility. Their final answer will be determined by the elected band council, but based on initial votes, there is no enthusiasm for the riches on offer.

Other First Nations have already agreed to the plan, which includes a pipeline to bring natural gas from the northeast corner of the province. But this one group, based on a

standing vote by a few hundred band members, could toss a wrench into plans for a \$36-billion project.

The main objection from Lax Kw'alaams members is the location: The proposed facility would be built on Lelu Island, adjacent to banks of eelgrass beds that nurture young Skeena salmon. But those concerns are developing into a broader sentiment against any LNG development in the region.

The Petronas-led project was on track to be the first major plant in production in B.C., with exports leaving the Port of Prince Rupert by 2019. The provincial government has a massive stake in delivering LNG, and a shovel-turning ceremony in time for the next provincial election campaign would be a coveted event.

The province has promoted a carefully woven narrative that First Nations support LNG, trickling out announcements of the many First Nations who have signed up for benefit agreements.

The outcome of the Lax Kw'alaams decision, by itself, doesn't undo that storyline, but there are other signs that the storyline is fraying at the edges.

The Squamish First Nation is conducting its own environmental assessment of the Woodfibre LNG project that is proposed for its community. They don't trust the federal and provincial governments to assess the project. Chief Ian Campbell said his nation will have a strong say in how any projects will unfold in their traditional territories, and there are deep-seated concerns about the potential damage to the Howe Sound ecosystem.

"It's an exercise in our own self-governance," he said in an interview. "We are going to assess these projects ourselves, not as stakeholders but as decision-makers."

His council expects to make a decision by June on whether it will support Woodfibre LNG, setting the table before the federal and provincial governments arrive with their own assessments.

John Rustad, the B.C. Minister for Aboriginal Relations, played down concern about the outcome of these decisions. He said 28 First Nations have signed benefit-sharing agreements on LNG, seven more are still in negotiations. "I know there is a lot of excitement by many of those nations that want to see the opportunity."

He does let slip, however, that he isn't sure that members of the Lax Kw'alaams have been told of all the efforts to address their concerns. The company has offered to build a suspension bridge and a trestle to reduce dredging. Both Ottawa and Victoria have promised the Lax Kw'alaams will have a role in environmental monitoring and habitat restoration.

"I don't know if that information has been shared with members," he said.

But the process is controlled by the Lax Kw'alaams council and the province must stay on the sidelines. There is one final vote in the coming week, for Vancouver-based band members, and any overt effort to influence that vote would be dangerous.

Proponents of LNG, like those of other resource industries, are grappling with growing demands to share the wealth with First Nations. But as these two examples make clear, expectations around consent are also being tested.

The province doesn't like to see the word "veto" in the same sentence as aboriginal rights. However, it is a genuine prospect with LNG, which is why so much effort has been made to court First Nations. The LNG investment climate is fragile, and the window appears to be closing. Any significant new hurdle or delay could tip the balance.

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/lacklustre-support-from-bc-first-nations-signals-trouble-for-lng-facility/article24361708/>

First Nations bring contaminated fish to legislature to protest Site C project



West Moberly First Nation Chief Roland Willson holds a frozen bull trout he says is contaminated with mercury in front of the Victoria Legislature . May 11, 2015. (THE CANADIAN PRESS/Dirk Meissner)

Dirk Meissner, The Canadian Press

Published Monday, May 11, 2015 6:10PM PDT

Last Updated Monday, May 11, 2015 7:42PM PDT

VICTORIA - West Moberly First Nations Chief Roland Willson held up a frozen Bull trout Monday and said the large fish is contaminated with mercury.

"Typically, you'd be proud of this fish," he said. "But we can't eat this."

Willson and members of the McLeod Lake Indian Band, located in northeastern British Columbia, arrived at the legislature in Victoria with more than 90 kilograms of Bull trout packed in two coolers.

The fish were there to illustrate a recent study by the band that concluded 98 per cent of their fish samples contain mercury levels above provincial guidelines. The study examined 57 fish taken from the Crooked River, where fish migrate from the Williston Lake reservoir.

Willson said the contaminated Bull trout are connected to that reservoir, which was created as part of the 1960s-era W.A.C. Bennett dam.

He warned similar contamination could result from the proposed \$9-billion Site C hydroelectric dam and 83-kilometre-long reservoir in the Peace River Valley near Fort St. John.

“Everybody's shocked,” said Willson. “It shouldn't just be the First Nations who are shocked,” he said. “This is an issue for everybody. The general public. Anybody who's eaten fish up there or out of that system, they need to be worried about what they are doing.”

The province's ministers of environment and energy and mines said they were not aware of mercury tests or studies associated with the W.A.C. Bennett dam or the Williston reservoir, but fish and water from the Site C reservoir will undergo rigorous and regular testing.

“It's important to note that this is a very different situation than what we find with Site C,” said Environment Minister Mary Polak.

Willson was blunt about his opposition to Site C, which the government approved last year.

“It's a mistake. It's a stupid idea,” he said.

Willson said the West Moberly support other methods of generating electricity in the northeast, including geothermal power and natural gas-powered energy.

The Site C dam, which through its reservoir would flood agricultural land, would annually produce 1,100 megawatts of electricity, enough to power about 450,000 homes.

Willson said the Williston Lake reservoir created the mercury pollution with the release of toxins from decaying trees and other materials in the flooded lands.

He said area First Nations are preparing to embark on a human study to determine if people have high levels of mercury.

Direct Link: <http://bc.ctvnews.ca/first-nations-bring-contaminated-fish-to-legislature-to-protest-site-c-project-1.2369703>

Province racks up LNG pipeline agreements with 28 First Nations

Majority of northern B.C. native groups have signed, but Lax Kw'alaams balking at \$1-billion industry-government deal

By Gordon Hoekstra, Vancouver Sun May 11, 2015



B.C.'s Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, John Rustad, revealed Sunday the government has revenue-sharing agreements in place with 28 First Nations for planned pipelines meant to supply proposed billion-dollar LNG plants on the coast of the province. Rustad is shown here during a ceremony last year in Chilliwack. File photo.

VANCOUVER -- The B.C. government revealed Sunday it has revenue-sharing agreements in place with 28 First Nations for planned pipelines meant to supply proposed billion-dollar LNG plants on the coast of B.C.

The province had publicly announced eight pipeline agreements with First Nations on four separate pipeline proposals in northwest B.C.

The details of the 20 other agreements and who they are with are being kept under wraps — at the request of the First Nations — because the native groups are in negotiations with companies as well, said Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation Minister John Rustad, who revealed the larger number of agreements that have been signed.

Rustad noted the province also has agreements in place on revenue-sharing with First Nations in northeast B.C. where natural gas is extracted.

The province is in negotiations with another seven First Nations, said Rustad, and if they reach agreement, will have unanimous support from First Nations of its major push to establish a liquefied natural gas (LNG) export industry to energy-hungry Asia.

It brings into stark relief the rejection last week by the Lax Kw'alaams First Nation in two community meetings of a \$1.14-billion benefits package from the Petronas-led Pacific NorthWest LNG project, TransCanada's Prince Rupert gas transmission pipeline and the province. The Lax Kw'alaams is one of the seven First Nations with which the province is still negotiating.

Rustad would not discuss the Lax Kw'alaams vote results — which will include another vote in Vancouver this week — out of respect for the process, he said.

“There is significant support already in place, but our goal through all of this has been to work with nations and try to find out how we can address concerns and find ways to be able to bring nations on side,” Rustad said in an interview.

“Liquefied natural gas provides a once in a lifetime opportunity for all British Columbia and especially for First Nations,” he said.

In a written statement, Pacific NorthWest LNG president Michael Culbert thanked the Lax Kw'alaams leadership for allowing them to present their benefits package to the community but otherwise said he would not comment on the voting.

Pacific NorthWest LNG signed benefit agreements recently with the Metlakatla and Kitselas First Nations.

While Canada's highest courts have said that First Nations do not have a veto on resource development or projects, First Nations' support for LNG is considered critical in moving plans forward.

First Nations have taken to the courts when they oppose projects.

The Lax Kw'alaams have raised environmental concerns about the Pacific NorthWest LNG project's affect on the Flora Bank, which contains eelgrass beds in the Skeena River estuary considered critical for juvenile salmon rearing.

The bank is just off Lelu Island, where the project will be built adjacent to Port Edward in northwest B.C.

The province has already approved the project following an environmental review. A federal review is expected to be complete later this year of a revised plan to span the eelgrass beds with a 1.6-kilometre suspension bridge.

Former Port Edward councillor and trucking company owner Murray Kristoff said he is angered there is a possibility the Lax Kw'alaams vote could stall or scuttle the Pacific NorthWest LNG project.

The project, led by Malaysian state-controlled Petronas, would spend an estimated \$36 billion on the LNG plant, pipeline and in extraction of gas in northeast B.C.

Kristoff's anger is directed at the B.C. Liberal government, which he says has created unrealistic expectations of LNG within First Nation communities in northwest B.C.

He noted the Deltaport expansion in the Lower Mainland is moving ahead, a project he argued had more environmental effects than Pacific NorthWest LNG.

"It's not fair to us up here," said Kristoff.

Direct Link:

<http://www.vancouversun.com/technology/Province+racks+pipeline+agreements+with+First+Nations/11045173/story.html>

Canadian Aboriginal Group Rejects \$1 Billion Fee for Natural Gas Project

By [IAN AUSTEN](#) MAY 13, 2015



Port Edward, British Columbia. A liquefied natural gas terminal planned for Lelu Island, in the background at left, was rejected. Credit Robin Rowland/The Canadian Press Images

OTTAWA — A small aboriginal community in British Columbia has rejected a \$1 billion payment for a [natural gas](#) project, the latest setback for the Canadian energy industry's effort to bolster exports.

A group led by the Malaysian energy company Petronas had offered the money to the Lax Kw'alaams Band, to help push through a plan to build a liquefied [natural gas](#) ship terminal near their remote community. It is part of an overall pipeline and gas drilling project that the group, Pacific NorthWest LNG, values at 36 billion Canadian dollars.

The community, which has about 3,600 members, has consistently rejected the plan over concerns that it would harm fish habitats, particularly for salmon. After six public meetings over the issue, the band council voted against the payment.

“Hopefully, the public will recognize that unanimous consensus in communities (and where unanimity is the exception) against a project where those communities are offered in excess of a billion dollars, sends an unequivocal message this is not a money issue: This is environmental and cultural,” Garry Reece, mayor of the band, said in a statement announcing the vote on Wednesday.

Canada’s strategy to increase gas exports has been running into challenges on several fronts.

[Keystone XL](#), a pipeline that would carry Canada’s [oil sands](#) to the American gulf coast, remains stalled in Washington. Other aboriginal groups have effectively blocked an [oil sands](#) pipeline project in British Columbia, the Northern Gateway.

Now, the liquefied natural gas project may also be in limbo.

About a decade ago, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that native groups like the Lax Kw’alaams that never signed treaties must be consulted and accommodated when projects cross their land. Last year, the court strengthened the powers of such communities although it stopped short of requiring their consent. But few industry observers believe that Pacific NorthWest or any other energy project would ignore native groups’ wishes, a step that could invite litigation and perhaps civil unrest.

While several concerns were raised over the liquefied natural gas pipeline at the public meetings, the greatest worry appeared to involve the potential disruption of water grasses, which are used as shelter from predators by juvenile salmon. Environmental studies commissioned by Pacific NorthWest and the band reached opposite conclusions about the terminal’s impact on aquatic life. The results of a review by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency are not expected until the fall.

To assuage those concerns, Pacific NorthWest proposed building a 1.1-kilometer-long suspension bridge over the sea grass. It also promised jobs and infrastructure improvements. The province of British Columbia, which is actively promoting the development of a natural gas industry, is also offering to give the native group a large amount of land.

On April 30, the developers offered an unusually high payment of 1.149 billion Canadian dollars to help sweeten the deal. Much of the money would have been distributed over 40 years in payments to community members, although the amount would have increased if the project had a longer life span.

Mr. Reece said in his statement that the band had been negotiating environment issues with the natural gas group since 2011. But he added that Pacific NorthWest LNG had

made “little effort to harmonize its field methods or its standards of data collection and interpretation with those of Lax Kw’alaams.” He added, though, that the community remained open to further talks.

Michael Culbert, the president of Pacific NorthWest, said in a statement that the company had consulted with native groups and made design changes to alleviate their concerns. He added that the pipeline was cleared under an environmental review by the province of British Columbia.

He said the company and its partners would “continue to assess the viability of the project.”

Direct Link: <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/14/business/energy-environment/canadian-aboriginal-group-rejects-1-billion-fee-for-natural-gas-project.html>

B.C. premier says First Nations opposition a bump in the road for LNG

By: Geordon Omand, The Canadian Press

Posted: **05/12/2015 3:48 PM** | Last Modified: 05/12/2015 7:39 PM |

BURNABY, B.C. - B.C. Premier Christy Clark insists the possible rejection by a First Nation of a liquefied-natural-gas terminal is nothing more than a bump in the road for a multibillion-dollar pipeline project.

Clark says she believes reaching a negotiated agreement with the 3,700-member Lax Kw'allams First Nation, on whose territory the terminal would be built, is only a matter of time.

Pacific NorthWest LNG wants to transport natural gas from the northeast corner of the province to an export facility on Lelu Island, just south of Prince Rupert.

Band members have been asked to vote on a \$1.15 billion offer over 40 years in exchange for their consent for the project.

"It's always a bit of a bumpy road to get to a negotiated agreement but I think we'll get there," said Clark about the possibility of a No vote. "It's part of the process."

Lax Kw'allams band member Malcolm Sampson was present for the initial two votes in Port Simpson and Prince Rupert and said both sessions resulted in unanimous rejection from members.

The same outcome is expected for the third and final vote in Vancouver on Tuesday, said Sampson.

The band's primary concern relates to the project's potential impact on Flora Bank, an underwater area immediately adjacent Lelu Island where an abundance of eel grass provides vital habitat to maturing salmon in the Skeena watershed.

Pacific NorthWest LNG responded to concerns by proposing to build a 1.7-kilometre suspension bridge that would bypass the sensitive underwater ecosystem. The span would be anchored by a pair of support towers, one planted on the edge of Lelu Island and the other just outside Flora Bank.

A trestle would then carry the pipeline the remainder of the nearly three kilometres to LNG carriers waiting at a deep-water berth.

The company recently submitted additional documents requested by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans related to the updated infrastructure proposal.

Observer and energy lawyer David Austin wonders why the band is set on holding a vote without all the information on the table, calling the move premature.

"The full impact is still unknown," said Austin, who is with the firm Clark Wilson.

But rejection wouldn't necessarily scuttle the project.

Lelu Island is Crown land managed by the Prince Rupert Port Authority, which means the province technically has the authority to push ahead without support from the Lax Kw'allams.

Even if the First Nation band proves it has aboriginal title — which would require proving it has had exclusive occupancy of the territory — Supreme Court precedent gives the province the right to override that claim.

"From a legal perspective it would be very complicated to proceed with the LNG terminal without (First Nation) support," said Austin. "But if the circumstances were right not impossible."

The length of time required to sort out the legal uncertainty resulting from a lack of First Nations support might encourage LNG developers to go elsewhere with their investments, he added.

The B.C. government said it has reached 54 pipeline-benefits agreements with 28 First Nations across the province. Of the 59 First Nations along the natural-gas pipeline ending at Lelu Island only five have publicly announced signing agreements with the government.

— Follow @gwomand on Twitter

Direct Link: <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/arts-and-life/life/greenpage/bc-premier-says-first-nations-opposition-a-bump-in-the-road-for-lng-303500781.html>

Editorial: Past offers clues to sustainability

Times Colonist
May 13, 2015 12:34 AM

Research into an expansive system of clam gardens along the Pacific Northwest coast is proving to be enlightening about the history of this region and its First Nations. It could also prove to be enlightening for our future.

A team of Simon Fraser University researchers has concluded that the clam gardens constructed by First Nations peoples date back more than 1,000 years, perhaps as much as 3,000 years. The researchers' evidence indicates that the coastal peoples were marine farmers who used sophisticated cultivation techniques to increase clam production. This counters the perception that First Nations were foragers and hunters who lived passively in a wild, untended environment.

That perception fuelled the attitude of European settlers who regarded apparently uncultivated land as being empty. If it wasn't obviously being farmed, they reasoned, it wasn't being used.

Clam gardens are beach flats that have been cleared of rocks and walled off or terraced to create more living space and suitable habitat for clams.

They are a relatively new discovery for archeologists. The first one was found in the Broughton Archipelago, off the north end of Vancouver Island, in 1995. Since then, many of the gardens have been discovered along coastlines from Washington state to Alaska.

SFU's Dana Lepofsky, lead author of an article on clam gardens published recently in the journal *American Antiquity*, said the idea that First Nations were hunter-gatherers made it easier for colonists to justify taking over the land because management of the resources differed from traditional European methods.

"Once you start calling someone a hunter-gatherer, there's something implied ... about not really being connected to the land or sea and not needing much from it," she said. "Even if they aren't formal agricultural plots in the way that Europeans recognized, they were still cultivating the landscape."

An example is the area that is now Beacon Hill Park — settlers saw only open meadows, but those meadows were areas tended by First Nations in the production of blue camas, an important food source.

So much of the history of European settlement in North America revolved around the “taming” of the landscape, the conquering of wilderness. While intensive cultivation has brought increased food production, it has also depleted ecosystems. The clam gardens, and other food-production practices of First Nations peoples, are an example of successfully working with nature, rather than trying to conquer it.

“For thousands of years, First Nations had access to an abundance of food, managing the natural resources found in the land and waters of Vancouver Island and adjoining islands, without depleting those resources,” wrote North Island College undergraduate students Julia Davis and Emma Twidale in a paper called Cultivating Food Sovereignty: Indigenous Food Systems on Vancouver Island. They cited experts who point to practices of Northwest First Nations as examples of sustainability that could be applicable to current situations.

First Nations practised “stewardship rather than ownership of natural resources,” wrote Davis and Twidale, and “created a sustainable lifestyle for thousands of years before Europeans arrived.”

What scientists are discovering, First Nations have long known, knowledge that has been held in First Nations songs, stories and traditions. Sustainability is talked about as if it’s something new, but it was a way of life for thousands of years on the West Coast.

We can’t turn the clock back and live exactly as the indigenous coastal peoples lived, but neither can we keep clearing forests, draining swamps, damming rivers, overfishing oceans and still expect the Earth to support us.

Research like that being done on clam gardens can deepen our understanding of the past. More important, it can help us make wiser decisions for the future.

- See more at: <http://www.timescolonist.com/opinion/editorials/editorial-past-offers-clues-to-sustainability-1.1932949#sthash.WQ3lelvD.dpuf>

Environment dwarfs financial merit in LNG deal for B.C. First Nations

BRENT JANG

PRINCE RUPERT, B.C. — The Globe and Mail

Published Friday, May. 08 2015, 6:41 PM EDT

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For the Lax Kw'alaams in British Columbia, Thursday's decision turned out to be simple – the environmental risks of a massive liquefied natural gas project far outweighed the financial rewards.

In the second stage of three votes, members of the B.C. First Nations group have again unanimously rejected a \$1-billion offer from the LNG joint venture led by Malaysia's state-owned Petronas.

More than 255 eligible Lax Kw'alaams voters at a meeting Thursday night in Prince Rupert declined to provide aboriginal consent to the Pacific NorthWest LNG project, say three sources close to the First Nations group. Row upon row, the people in attendance stood up to indicate their opposition at the North Coast Meeting and Convention Centre, located on the lower level of the Chances casino.

Aboriginal leaders and environmentalists say the proposed LNG export terminal on Lelu Island, near Prince Rupert, would be a threat to salmon habitat in the nearby sandy, reef-like Flora Bank. Critics say Lelu Island in the estuary of the Skeena River is a terrible place to locate the export terminal because of the threat to juvenile salmon habitat and the Lax Kw'alaams' way of life. "Lax Kw'alaams would no longer be able to harvest traditional plants and medicines on Lelu Island," according to a bulletin issued by the First Nations group to its members.

There are also worries that native history and signs of traditional culture will be lost, notably from damage to culturally significant trees, such as ones partly stripped of bark by aboriginals over the decades.

"Up to 431 culturally modified trees (CMTs) would be destroyed during the construction of the facility, although the proponent will attempt to preserve parts of the CMTs with modified features on them," the bulletin said.

Pacific NorthWest LNG estimates that \$36-billion will need to be spent in order to make its planned exports a reality in 2019. The huge budget includes \$11.4-billion for the LNG export terminal on Lelu Island and \$5-billion for TransCanada Corp.'s Prince Rupert Gas Transmission pipeline proposal.

In the first vote in the community of Lax Kw'alaams on Tuesday night, more than 180 eligible voters also unanimously stood up to show their opposition to the Pacific NorthWest LNG joint venture.

Lax Kw'alaams Mayor Garry Reece and 12 elected councillors will make the final decision on behalf of the 3,600-member band, after voting wraps up next Tuesday in Vancouver.

“We would like to thank Lax Kw’alaams Mayor Reece and council for inviting Pacific NorthWest LNG to address community members in Prince Rupert for the first time,” Pacific NorthWest LNG president Michael Culbert said in a statement. “Out of respect to the ongoing process overseen by Mayor and council, it is premature and improper to comment further.”

Besides the offer of \$1-billion in cash over 40 years from Pacific NorthWest LNG, the B.C. government is willing to transfer 2,200 hectares of Crown land, valued at \$108-million, including parcels in the Prince Rupert harbour area and other property near Lax Kw’alaams.

The Petronas-led group had a series of brochures for Lax Kw’alaams to read on Thursday night. “Listening to your feedback has helped us design one-of-a-kind marine infrastructure to protect fish and fish habitat in the Skeena estuary,” said one brochure, which showed plans to build a suspension bridge and trestle from Lelu Island to a deep berth location in Chatham Sound.

The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA) launched its review of Pacific NorthWest LNG in April, 2013.

Earlier this year, Pacific NorthWest LNG agreed to conduct “3-D sediment dispersion modelling” to study the complex system that effectively holds Flora Bank in place.

“The proponent has provided a partial response and the agency looks forward to receiving the remaining information when it is available,” CEAA said in a statement Friday. “The timeline for the Pacific NorthWest LNG project remains paused on day 240 of the maximum 365-day legislated time frame and will resume when all of the information is received.”

There are 19 B.C. LNG projects vying to export to foreign markets. They include 11 export licences that have been approved by the National Energy Board, including one announced Friday for a WesPac Midstream LNG proposal south of Vancouver.

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/industry-news/energy-and-resources/environment-dwarfs-financial-merit-in-lng-deal-for-bc-first-nations/article24349254/>

Land Claims & Treaty Rights

Saskatchewan First Nation owed \$4M from feds that wasn’t paid in 1885: tribunal

PRINCE ALBERT, Sask — The Canadian Press

Published Friday, May. 08 2015, 11:11 AM EDT

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An independent tribunal has ruled the federal government owes a Saskatchewan First Nation millions of dollars from 130 years ago.

The Specific Claims Tribunal said in its decision that the federal government withheld treaty payments to Beardy's Okemasis First Nation between 1885 and 1888 following the Northwest Rebellion.

The federal government has 30 days to respond and could appeal.

Chief Rick Gamble says he's not celebrating just yet because he says the federal government likes to fight treaty rights in the courts.

Gamble says if the money is paid, it will be split between band members and band administration.

The First Nation is about 90 kilometres north of Saskatoon.

Thirteen other First Nations in Saskatchewan could also be affected by the decision.

While Beardy's Okemasis First Nation was the claimant on the lawsuit, the other bands are listed as interveners.

The others are Chakastaypasin, Little Pine, Lucky Man, Moosomin, Mosquito/Grizzly Bear's Head/Lean Man, Muskeg Lake, One Arrow, Onion Lake, Poundmaker, Red Pheasant, Sweetgrass, Thunderchild, and Young Chippewayan.

Lawyer Ron Maurice said he hopes the government resolves all claims at once, rather than individually.

"After 130 years First Nations who wrongfully had their annuities withheld for alleged participation in the rebellion will finally get justice," vice-Chief Bobby Cameron of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations said in a statement.

"This is remarkable news for our Treaty First Nations, but there is still considerable work to be done to right the many injustices our people have suffered in other areas like natural resource development and the natural resources transfer agreement which was unilaterally imposed. We are committed to undertaking this work."

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/saskatchewan-first-nation-owed-4m-from-feds-that-wasnt-paid-in-1885-tribunal/article24327888/>

Special Topic: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women

Winnipeggers rally for awareness about missing and murdered Aboriginal women

By [Shannon Cuciz](#) Reporter Global News, May 10, 2015 6:15 pm



Families gathered at The Forks to support each other and raise awareness about the many missing and murdered Aboriginal women across the country.

WINNIPEG – It's an annual cry for help and awareness.

More than 100 Winnipeggers rallied at The Forks on Mother's Day to draw attention to the ongoing issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada.

"I pray every day to stay strong for her and for people to continue searching for her," said Susan Caribou, who is still mourning the loss of her niece Tanya Nepinak. "She was a mother... she doesn't belong in no dump and to be left like trash."

Caribou is one of many family members still mourning the unsolved murders of their loved ones.

"We have so much pain because we don't know where Claudette is or what happened to her and... we need our community's support," said Bernadette Smith, the sister of Claudette Osborne who has been missing since 2008.

Families in attendance Sunday were also hoping to help heal those still searching for closure.

“It’s the centre of Canada and this is where our people gathered for many, many years and you can feel the spirit here,” said the event co-organizer Barbara Shoomski.

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/1990270/winnipeggers-rally-for-awareness-about-missing-and-murdered-aboriginal-women/>

Will an Inquiry into the Deaths of Canadian Aboriginal Women Bring Peace to Their Families?

May 11, 2015

By Jane Gerster



The last family photo taken of Sonya during the family's July 1994 informal gathering in Espanola, Ontario. Sonya is crouching in the blue shirt at the front. All photos courtesy Mag Cywink.

This article originally appeared on VICE Canada.

[Read Part 1 of this story here.](#)

Mag Cywink has spent more than two decades hoping whoever killed her younger sister Sonya would some day face justice. Sonya, an Ojibway woman from Whitefish River First Nation, was last seen in London, Ontario, on August 24, 1994. Her body was found five days later at Southwold Earthworks, a 40-minute drive southwest.

In a case without resolution, Mag finds solace in her sister's final resting place.

Southwold Earthworks National Historic Site is leafy and green in the summer, surrounded by clearly visible mounds of soil—earthworks—intentionally shaped around a fortified village built centuries ago by the Attiwandaron.

"This was a real tragedy for us and definitely for Sonya and her child, but I look at that place as being a sacred place," Mag says. If it had to happen, "I'm glad it happened here."

Sonya was killed at a time when headlines about missing and murdered indigenous women were rare. Mag has seen the frequency of these headlines increase, but she has not seen justice for her sister.

"It's almost like we get inundated with this information now," she says, "people are just kind of like, 'Oh, that's just another missing and murdered woman.' It sort of passes by people's radars."



Southwold Earthworks, where Sonya's body was found, as pictured in August 2014, on the twentieth anniversary of her death.

That's part of why Sonya, in death, has become Sonya Nadine Mae. How many other Sonyas have been murdered or gone missing? Mag wonders.

She doesn't know exactly. What she does know is that nearly 1,200 indigenous women have gone missing or been murdered in the last three decades. That's according to an [RCMP report](#) released last year. Yet some believe those high numbers may actually understate the truth. The RCMP report is "statistically skewed," wrote Pam Palmater, a Mi'kmaq lawyer and chair in Indigenous Governance at Ryerson University, on her website, [Indigenous Nationhood](#).

Palmater highlights numerous problems with the RCMP's review. To name a few: the limitations of the Canadian Police Information Centre; women whose disappearances were never documented, or who were mislabeled as "white"; a highly problematic reliance on Indian Status to determine who is indigenous; and the violence Aboriginal

women and girls have faced from the RCMP itself, per a lengthy Human Rights Watch report.

Amongst all this violence, "There could be 15 Sonyas that have been murdered," Mag says. She would like people to know her Sonya—to know her strengths, her skills, and how much she was loved, how much she is missed, how much her family still hopes for justice for Sonya, and for the unborn baby they never got to meet.



Mag Cywink.

In early April this year, Mag wrote an opinion piece for [the Manitoulin Expositor](#). Her first sentence: "Is a national inquiry going to answer the question and solve the epidemic of Canada's Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls?" Her answer: I don't think so.

"I'm not really popular," Mag says, because she doesn't support a national inquiry, yet in the community she surrounds herself with, she says many do. Many indigenous people across Canada agree with her and others still are unsure; there is no uniform indigenous opinion on whether an inquiry would help. However, much of the media attention has focused on the push for a national inquiry.

Part of why Mag says she doesn't support an inquiry is because there are so many factors underlying the epidemic of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls that she feels need addressing now. As she wrote in her opinion piece: "those who are living on or off reserve, poverty, homelessness, drug and alcohol substance abuse, lack of safe housing, adequate education and job skills, early pregnancy, gang activity, abductions, mental issues, domestic abuse and violence, child welfare, questions about the lack of stricter sentencing, adoption, inadequate policing into the death or disappearance at all levels to name a few."

The arguments in favor of an inquiry have been passionate, personal, and persuasive, but Mag worries about the money that would be spent. That money, she believes, would be better used to reinstate funding for projects like Sisters in Spirit—a research, education

and policy initiative, led by Aboriginal women, whose funding was cut by the federal government in 2010—and on community-led prevention projects. Mag also fears that an inquiry might diminish the voices of the very people it's supposed to help—the families who've lost loved ones—by focusing too much on lawyers, judges, and "First Nations representatives." (This is what happened in the Robert Pickton inquiry.)

What will another inquiry achieve? Mag wonders.

"Awareness leads to understanding leads to action," says Perry Bellegarde, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations. Bellegarde's been lobbying the federal government for a national inquiry, although he stresses it's not meant to replace other remedies.

"The inquiry that we're pushing for is not to get in the way of action needed on the ground," he says, and much is required.

A 2014 report from the UN's Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples highlighted Canada's failings: "Despite positive steps, daunting challenges remain. The numerous initiatives that have been taken at the federal and provincial/territorial levels to address the problems faced by indigenous peoples have been insufficient. The well-being gap between Aboriginal and non-aboriginal people in Canada has not narrowed over the past several years; treaty and aboriginal claims remain persistently unresolved; indigenous women and girls remain vulnerable to abuse; and overall there appear to be high levels of distrust among indigenous peoples towards the government at both the federal and provincial levels."

An inquiry, Bellegarde says, would help to address the broader systemic issues: the ways in which Canadian laws, organizations, and politics have contributed to disproportionately high rates of violence against indigenous women and girls.



Sonya, age 14, in the fall of 1977.

In particular, it would open Canada's eyes, "So they start viewing indigenous women in a real light where they're valued as human beings because right now you can look at society as a whole and say, 'They don't appear to value First Nations women. They are less than other women. They are less.' And the point we make continually is that their lives are just as important."

Mag agrees with these goals, but isn't sure the inquiry is the way to achieve them.

To work, Mag says, the solutions "can't come from the top down." The people most affected aren't on Parliament Hill, she argues—they're almost worlds away from Ottawa, many in rural, far-flung, isolated communities.

"Each individual territory... has their own specific issues and I think only those places know what their problems really are," she says.

She'd like to see a series of smaller, community-led inquiries coupled with organizations specific to different communities working to break well-documented cycles of violence, poverty, and poor education. "We are the bearers of these children," Mag says. The rest of Canada should play a supporting role by getting educated and learning the facts since "a lot of people stick their heads in the sand."

"It's not going to change overnight," Mag cautions. "I'm the generation where change is happening now, and it's going to take probably another three or four generations before we get where we need to be. Maybe longer."

Whatever form an inquiry takes, it is unlikely to achieve meaningful change if it doesn't break decisively with the federal government's history of paternalism towards indigenous people. The existence of status remains a serious problem, says Larry Chartrand, a Métis law professor at the University of Ottawa who specializes in issues of indigenous identity—specifically, "The idea that one people or race can define who is a member of another community or race." Indeed, the United Nations recognizes the right to self-determination.

"Canadians should be somewhat cautious about having a government that feels it has the authority to define who another people is," he says. By "defining another people, you can have authority to legislate over that people," as with the Indian Act, and this "diminishes their humanity. It takes away their independence as a people. It can be very devastating. I think if communities realized the connection between citizenship and the government imposition of status and how that has had that negative effect, I think Canadians might be more sympathetic to some of the challenges indigenous peoples face."

Sonya wrote letters upon letters growing up. Mag still has a couple of these old missives, written in her sister's flowing, elegant handwriting. Sonya had this talent for cursive, Mag says, everything she wrote was unerringly beautiful and graceful to look at. "It looks like

she was just painting," Mag says. To have some of Sonya's words, her art—to be able to trace the lines she wrote—feels like a gift. Mag looks; she reads; she remembers.

"Sonya set the sisterhood bar high," she says. Mag wants people to know that. She wants people to understand, even just a little, the wonderful woman who was her sister.

"[Sonya] was intelligent; she was kind; she was funny; she was gentle," Mag says. "She taught me to love deeply and to forgive others often." Her voice trails off, then continues. "I miss her every day."

Direct Link: <http://www.vice.com/read/why-the-sister-of-a-murdered-aboriginal-woman-is-opposing-a-national-inquiry-952>

Murdered aboriginal woman remembered on Mother's Day

Five years later, Amber Tuccaro's murder remains unsolved

[CBC News](#) Posted: May 11, 2015 11:50 AM MT Last Updated: May 11, 2015 11:50 AM MT



April Eve Wiberg, right, and members of the Stolen Sisters and Brother Awareness movement pray, in memory of Amber Tuccaro. (Travis McEwan/CBC)

In a field south of Edmonton where spring is slowly returning, a group of people celebrated Mother's Day and a mother whose murder remains unsolved.

"She should be here with us celebrating Mother's Day," said April Eve Wiberg with the Stolen Sisters and Brothers Awareness movement.

"She's been robbed from her family, her son, she deserves to be honoured, she deserves justice."

[It's been five years since Amber Tuccaro, 20, went missing.](#) Her son, Jacob, was 14 months old when she disappeared.

She was last seen at a hotel in Nisku, where she was staying with a female friend. She was visiting from Fort McMurray, where she was living with her mother. Tuccaro's plan was to stay the night outside the city to save money and head into Edmonton the next day.

Tuccaro was too excited and decided to hitchhike into the city that night. When she didn't return by the next day, the friend called her mother, who then called the RCMP.

[On Aug. 28, 2012, RCMP released a cellphone conversation](#) Tuccaro had while in the company of an unidentified man. They hoped it would bring in tips to help identify him.

The man is heard in the background trying to convince Tuccaro that he is driving east from Nisku to travel into Edmonton along 50th Street.

On Sunday, Wiberg and a few others replayed that phone conversation, the best "clue" they said, and laid flowers near the spot where Tuccaro's remains were found in September 2012.



Members of the group, Stolen Sisters and Brothers Awareness movement, put up posters like this one on the weekend near Leduc. (Travis McEwan/CBC)

The group also put up posters, encouraging anyone who may have seen something or know something to call police.

"We're hoping that this will help jog someone's memory. Maybe they'd seen something. Maybe they'd seen Amber get inside of a vehicle," said Wiberg, who didn't know Tuccaro but said she feels connected to her because they are both from the Mikisew Cree First Nation in northeastern Alberta.

Since Tuccaro's remains were found, the bodies of two other missing and murdered women have been located in the same area — the most recent was Delores Brower, found on Apr. 19, 2015.

"There's something very, very disturbing going on. There doesn't seem to be any coincidence that there was four women found within miles of each other," said Wiberg.

"It's very, very sad that these are things that are happening to the women in our community," said Rivers Stonechild, a volunteer with the organization.

"I could be my little sister out there. My niece, my mom. It could be any family member I know and love. It hits close to home."

Stonechild is one of just a few men involved with Stolen Sisters and Brothers Awareness movement. He said he hopes more men get involved to help find answers about what's happening with murdered and missing aboriginal women.

The organization also raised the alarm that the person responsible for Tuccaro's murder may be living in Leduc or in the surrounding area, and again encouraged people to listen to the voice, the man Tuccaro last spoke with.

"We suspect that this individual may live out here in Leduc or Leduc county. It's important that if these crimes are occurring here that people are aware of some of the dangers," said Wiberg.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/murdered-aboriginal-woman-remembered-on-mother-s-day-1.3069381>

Families straddle gulf between hope and grief when loved one goes missing

By Otiena Ellwand, Edmonton Journal May 11, 2015

EDMONTON - Shelly Dene hasn't aged or changed in nearly two years.

She's frozen in time, a young woman with black hair cascading to her collarbones, life halted at age 25. Missing.

"I don't want to think she's dead," says her grandmother, Katie Dene, 74. "I want to think she's still alive somewhere."

Wearing a high school graduation cap and gown, Shelly grins proudly in a picture hung in her grandmother's Edmonton apartment.

In another photograph, she tilts her head and smiles coyly at the camera. Framing the picture in block letters is the word "Loved."

That photo was brought to a rally at Churchill Square last summer to raise awareness about her August 2013 disappearance. About 60 people were there, drumming and singing as they walked the perimeter of the square.

Nothing has changed. Edmonton police say there's no indication of foul play. There have been no new leads.

Shelly's case is one of the city's 82 historical open missing persons files — people generally missing for three months or more — since 1971.

Of those, nine involve aboriginal women and 11 aboriginal men. That's about 24 per cent of the cases, despite aboriginal people making up slightly more than five per cent of Edmonton's population.

The overrepresentation is not unusual. In an RCMP report released last May, investigators found that 1,017 aboriginal women were victims of homicide across Canada since 1980 and another 164 aboriginal women were missing — much higher than previous estimates. And even though aboriginal women make up four per cent of the country's female population, they represent 16 per cent of all murdered women between 1980 and 2012 and 11 per cent of all missing women.

First Nations leaders, including the Native Women's Association of Canada, have called for a national inquiry and action plan to address violence against indigenous women and girls. The federal government has refused, saying enough studies have been done and tougher laws have already been implemented to deal with violence against all women. The prime minister has also said he views the problem as criminal, rather than sociological.

The RCMP later this month is expected to provide an update on the unsolved cases of missing and murdered aboriginal women, as well as an update on current missing cases.

Shelly Dene, reported missing from Edmonton on Nov. 8, 2013, and Misty Potts, last seen near Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation and reported missing April 5, should be included in that update.

Potts, 37, was born in Edmonton and raised on the Alexis reserve, about 70 kilometres northwest of Edmonton. She was well known and deeply involved in her community. After completing a master's degree in environmental science at the University of Manitoba, she became outspoken about environmental degradation and its impact on aboriginal people.

Eva Potts describes her sister as funny, smart and selfless, recalling how she put her seamstress and beading skills to work making outfits, such as jingle dresses for children who couldn't afford them, so they could participate in reserve princess pageants.

“I remember when she first left the reserve for school when I was nine years old and I cried for like a week. I didn’t want her to go,” says Eva, 27.

Despite the physical separation, the two remained close. They lived together in Edmonton in 2007 and Eva often helped care for Misty’s young son.

In 2011, the sisters’ older brother Zachary, 36, who had been like a father to them, died in a gun accident. “Ever since then, things haven’t been the same,” Eva says.

Around that time, Misty’s marriage started to fall apart.

Misty started smoking marijuana and was soon taking prescription pills. She may have moved on to methamphetamines.

Misty and her husband separated. He moved to Winnipeg with their son in 2012.

Misty travelled there in February to see her boy, but the trip didn’t go well. She called Eva to tell her that she was coming home and she wanted to go to rehab.

“‘I’m going to fight. I’m going to get my kid back,’” Eva recalls her sister saying.

When Misty got home, she seemed antsy and withdrawn.

“I’m really thinking about the days leading up to her disappearing, maybe that had an effect, or maybe she felt like she didn’t care anymore,” Eva says.

Misty was last seen by her family Feb. 24. She went to a convenience store on the reserve with her mother and saw some friends there. Misty said she’d return home on her own.

Mayerthorpe RCMP have conducted ground searches in the area. “We are concerned for Misty and her well-being,” RCMP Const. Rob Gillies said in a written statement April 29. “We hope that information from the public can lead to her whereabouts.”

At First, Eva wasn’t worried. She heard Misty was with her boyfriend. It wasn’t uncommon for her sister to leave home for a week or two.

But she would always call.

“We’re really close. She wouldn’t do this to me, anyway. She would call me. She would tell me, ‘I’m OK, don’t worry,’ ” Eva says.

“I still believe my sister is alive and I still want to know she’s OK. We just want to know she’s OK.”

Shelly Dene grew up in Fort McMurray and Fort McKay, the middle child of three. After her parents split up in 1997, her mother Yvette L'Hommecourt moved with the children to Vernon, B.C. Shelly was 11.

Shelly's younger sister, Candice L'Hommecourt, 25, says it was a rocky upbringing. They began using drugs and drinking as teenagers. At home, they didn't have much guidance or discipline. Candice doesn't blame her parents, noting both attended residential schools.

"We talked about it all the time. We don't ever remember that love and affection and discipline that a child needs to mould us. It's kind of like we were guiding ourselves and, obviously, that didn't work out too well," Candice said from her home in Fort McMurray where she is a student at Keyano College.

Shelly made up for that lack of affection by looking after her siblings. "She always took care of me, whenever I got hurt, she was the one that was there," Candice said.

Shelly had an artistic flair. She dreamed of becoming an interior designer, Yvette said. She liked painting on drums. She made her own clothes, once turning a pair of coveralls into a skirt. She took up crocheting and made scarves.

In 2007, after the birth of Shelly's son, the family was struck by two tragedies in quick succession. When Shelly found out her biological father was dying from a brain tumour, she went to Edmonton to spend time with him. Even though she hadn't seen him in 20 years, she was at the hospital nearly every day.

Shortly after, their maternal grandmother died. Shelly didn't have the skills to cope.

She would sober up, then relapse.

In the summer of 2013, Shelly travelled from Kelowna to Edmonton to visit her stepsister and paternal grandmother.

Shelly was in a dark place because she had just found out she wouldn't be getting her son back despite three years of sobriety, Candice says.

"After three years of doing everything that she can, I feel like she just gave up ... He was her motivation, he was her pride and joy. Without him, she felt like she had nothing," Candice says. "She was lost."

Yvette, 50, spoke to Shelly on the phone in June, shortly after she arrived in Edmonton. Shelly was crying. She was having nightmares that she would never see her mother again. It was the last time Yvette spoke to her daughter.

One day in August 2013, Shelly and a man stopped by her grandmother Katie Dene's Edmonton apartment where she was staying at the time. She packed a small knapsack and

told Katie she was going to the Yukon. She left the rest of her belongings and said she would be back soon. She kissed her grandmother goodbye.

“I said, ‘Look after yourself,’ ” Katie recalls. “She said, ‘Yes, I’m a big girl grandma, I can take care of myself.’”

When Katie returned from vacation in British Columbia a few weeks later, Shelly’s suitcases were gone.

“She was so trusting. She trusted anybody that talked to her,” Katie says.

She he was worried about her granddaughter because she was drinking again and taking drugs.

“I tried telling her, ‘Stay home sometimes, we can play cards or play dice.’ ... She was always on the go, ‘I’ve got to meet a friend.’ I don’t know who that friend was.”

It is difficult to get an accurate count of missing and murdered indigenous women, RCMP say, because thousands of people are reported missing every day in Canada. The number of missing aboriginal women is likely much higher than reported because missing women are not always identified as aboriginal. It’s also possible disappearances go unreported. There have also been allegations from some families that police have not taken their concerns seriously.

Edmonton police say they get thousands of tips every year about missing people

Last year, all but two of the files that came in to Edmonton police were solved. Three historical files were solved as well.

A woman reported missing in 2010 was found alive in the United States, a man reported missing in 1977 was found alive in Edmonton, and a man reported missing in 1984 was confirmed dead.

On April 19, the skeletal remains of Delores Brower, a woman who went missing from Edmonton 11 years ago, were found on a rural property east of Leduc. Brower had been part of the Edmonton Police Service’s historical missing persons files. Now her case is being handled by the RCMP’s historical homicide unit.

“While we are grieving with some sense of relief, we know there are many families who have yet to find the answers they are seeking,” Brower’s family said in a statement released through the RCMP, noting several other investigations into missing and murdered women from the Edmonton area remain unsolved.

Danielle Boudreau, who organized the first memorial march in Edmonton for missing and murdered women 10 years ago, knows first-hand what it’s like to deal with police in tragic circumstances. Two of her friends were murdered. So was her sister, Juanita

Cardinal, in 2006. She said there was a lack of communication between her family and police, which made them feel cut off from the investigation.

Boudreau also takes issue with women like her sister, being labelled “high-risk” because of the lifestyles they led.

“We’re putting labels on each other and those labels are prioritizing us,” she says. “The First Nations, Métis, Inuit women, it seems to be that there’s always that stigma that they’re less than the other people. ... We’re all equal and circumstances are different in every case.”

Edmonton police spokesman Scott Pattison says the term “high-risk” is used in many contexts, such as when someone is homeless, has addictions, engages in prostitution, has health concerns, such as dementia or suicidal ideation, or because of their age. The majority of the historical missing persons files are categorized as high-risk, regardless of a person’s ethnicity, he says.

When someone is reported missing, the person who reports it is asked to do some legwork first: check with hospitals, shelters or other services they use regularly, he says.

When people live a transient lifestyle, their disappearance might not raise any red flags until months have passed, which is when they’re reported to police, Pattison says.

Back in her apartment, grandmother Katie Dene tries not to dwell too much on her missing granddaughter and all the other people she has lost.

“If I didn’t pray, I’d go nuts. I’d be in the nuthouse by now.

“I try not to think the worst.”

Direct Link:

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/Families+straddle+gulf+between+hope+grief+when+loved+goes+missing/11045290/story.html>

Canada has failed to protect indigenous women from violence, says UN official

UN special rapporteur says Canadian government has repeatedly failed First Nations women and calls for national inquiry into decades-long epidemic

[Tom McCarthy](#) in New York

Tuesday 12 May 2015 13.00 BST Last modified on Tuesday 12 May 2015 13.05 BST

[Canada](#) has repeatedly failed to put an end to a decades-long epidemic of violence against First Nations women, according to the UN special rapporteur on the rights of indigenous people, who renewed a call for a national inquiry into the problem.

Speaking to the Guardian in New York, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz said the government had taken some steps to try to protect Aboriginal women, including direct funding for about 30 organizations to reduce violence against them.

But she added: “That’s not enough. That’s not an adequate response.”

Tauli-Corpuz pointed to the killing of First Nations woman [Cindy Gladue](#), who bled to death in a hotel bathtub in Edmonton in 2011 after she was stabbed by a trucker who prosecutors say had hired her as a prostitute.

The man accused of her murder, Bradley Barton, [was found not guilty](#) in March, a verdict which prompted outrage among activists. Following a national [letter-writing](#) campaign, the government [said](#) it would appeal the verdict.

Tauli-Corpuz traveled to Canada in April to draw attention to a seven-year-old UN demand for the government to conduct an inquiry into violence against First Nations women which has claimed 1,017 victims from 1980 to 2012, according to a [report](#) by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Another 164 remain missing.

“The government looks at it as not really something that’s related to racism,” said Tauli-Corpuz.

But indigenous groups contend that institutional racism contributes to a culture of impunity for perpetrators of crimes against Aboriginal women, Tauli-Corpuz said. “Their claim is that the police are so discriminatory against indigenous women, and so [the police] don’t believe that there are these kinds of things happening,” Tauli-Corpuz said. “They really blame it on racism, number one.

“They are really requesting the government of Canada to do a national inquiry. Because there has never been any official national inquiry into the issue. That was the recommendation of my predecessor as well.”

Asked in December about conducting such an inquiry, the prime minister, Stephen Harper, [replied](#): “It isn’t really high on our radar, to be honest.” The minister for the status of women, Kellie Leitch, [said](#) in March that the problem had been sufficiently studied and that resources should be devoted to prevention measures.

Tauli-Corpuz’s comments followed a March finding by the [United Nations](#) Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) that the Canadian government had committed “grave violations” of the human rights of indigenous women by not doing more to address the epidemic of violence against them.

“The committee notes that its factual findings have highlighted that the measures taken to prevent and protect Aboriginal women from disappearances and murders have been insufficient and inadequate, that the weaknesses in the justice and enforcement system have resulted in impunity and that there has been a lack of any efforts to bring about any significant compensation and reparation,” the CEDAW report said.

Assembly of First Nations chief Perry Bellegarde renewed the call for an inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women in a [statement in March](#). “Canada’s inaction in regard to missing and murdered Indigenous women is getting increasing international attention, and this latest from CEDAW calling it a ‘grave violation of human rights’ cannot be ignored,” Bellegarde said.

Direct Link: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/12/canada-violence-indigenous-first-nations-women>

Missing First Nations girl likely mauled to death by bear

Garden Hill First Nation in mourning

By [David Larkins](#), *Winnipeg Sun*

First posted: Tuesday, May 12, 2015 11:07 AM EDT | Updated: Tuesday, May 12, 2015 09:15 PM EDT



Teresa Cassandra Robinson was last seen on Tuesday, May 5. Her body was found six days later during a search of the area.

A Manitoba First Nation is in mourning following the death of a young girl there on Monday.

RCMP confirmed Tuesday they were investigating the death of the girl at Garden Hill First Nation, located about 475 kilometres northeast of Winnipeg.

Tara Seel, a spokeswoman with Manitoba RCMP, said she could not release details, citing the ongoing investigation.

“I can confirm the RCMP is investigating the death of a young female in Garden Hill,” she said. “Further to that, we can’t discuss anything else at this time.

“At this point in the investigation, we have to be very careful because we don’t want to influence anything.”

Numerous media reports, the first coming from CBC, identified the victim as 11-year-old Teresa Robinson. A Facebook memorial page, “R.I.P Teresa Robinson,” was also established.

Elizabeth and Rick Greer own and operate Pathway Camp Ministries, a faith-based organization that runs day camps in seven First Nations communities, including Garden Hill. Elizabeth Greer said she was “devastated” when she heard the news. Although Robinson wasn’t one of the campers they’ve worked with in their eight years of going to Garden Hill, many of the campers who have used their services “lost a friend.”

“Many of our campers would have been her schoolmates, so that’s how it touches us. The kids that we care about are going through this,” she said from Moosehorn. “The children up there are amazing and they have enough hardship just living in the far north with all the limitations that come with that. To have to lose a friend in such tragic circumstances is just heartbreaking.”

The Winnipeg Sun has sent a request for an interview with Garden Hill Chief Arnold Flett.

A councillor reached by phone on Tuesday said members of the governing council were asked not to speak to the media.

Direct Link: <http://www.torontosun.com/2015/05/12/missing-first-nations-girl-likely-mauled-by-bear>

Children of aboriginal woman slain in 2004 speak publicly for 1st time

Diana Rattlesnake's son and daughter hope by speaking out, more tips on the case will come in

By Meagan Fiddler, [CBC News](#) Posted: May 13, 2015 4:30 AM CT Last Updated: May 13, 2015 9:08 PM CT



Diana Rattlesnake in an undated photo. Her badly decomposed body was found in a Brandon rooming house in October 2004. (Anna Hanska)

Jeremy and Anna Hanska have never spoken publicly about the slaying of their mother, Diana Rattlesnake, but after seeing CBC's coverage of the unsolved cases of murdered and missing indigenous women in Canada, the siblings wanted her story to be told.

'They just saw her as a statistic and not as a human being.' - *Jeremy Hanska, son of slain woman*

Anna remembers a loving mother who took them to powwows and hockey games.

"My mom was a happy person," she said. "She was always laughing, joking around, always taking care of her family."

Rattlesnake's homicide went relatively unnoticed in Brandon, Man. Anna said there were only a few mentions in the local newspaper. Her brother has a theory about why there wasn't more attention from police to the case.



Anna Hanska contacted CBC to share her mother Diana Rattlesnake's story. (CBC)

"Probably because she's aboriginal, and she had her demons, and they just saw her as a statistic and not as a human being," Jeremy said.

Anna pointed to the [death of another Brandon woman, Erin Chorney](#), and the amount of effort police dedicated in solving that case.

"Like, they did this big sting operation. And my mom basically got nothing," she said.

Rattlesnake had been mentioned in the newspaper before. After years of living in an abusive relationship, she fatally shot her husband in the back in 1987, and was sentenced to four years behind bars.



Jeremy Hanska says it was difficult coping with the deaths of both his parents. (CBC)

Anna and her brothers were sent to live with their maternal grandfather. Jeremy said he did his best to block out the trauma.

"It was painful to have both of your parents murdered," he said.

Anna said after Rattlesnake served her sentence in Portage la Prairie, Man., the family moved to Brandon, Man., in search of a new start. But her mother got involved in another violent relationship, and was found dead in a Brandon rooming house in October 2004.

Rattlesnake's body was so badly decomposed when it was found that police couldn't pinpoint the day she died.

Jeremy remembers the day he learned about his mother's death.

"My uncle knocked on my bedroom door and told me what happened. He said, 'I'm sorry they found your mom's body.' I didn't know what to say then. I was in shock."

More could be done

Anna said she used to call the Brandon Police Service for updates, but gave up years ago on hearing anything new. Brandon police said all they can do is wait for a lead to come in, but Anna said more could be done to try to solve the case.

"They should be trying to ask, ask around, ask other people, you know, maybe someone will come forward now that so many years have passed, but they don't," she said.

The Hanskas hope that by sharing their mother's story, new tips will come in. They believe their mom deserves better.

If you have any information on the Diana Rattlesnake case or any other unsolved cases involving missing or murdered indigenous women, email our team at mmiw@cbc.ca.

Clarifications

- A previous version of this story said Diana Rattlesnake's son, Jeremy Hanska, had a theory about why there wasn't 'more coverage' of his mother's death. In fact, the family was not critical of media coverage of the case; rather, they were questioning why there wasn't more attention from police to the case.

May 13, 2015 11:22 AM CT

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/children-of-aboriginal-woman-slain-in-2004-speak-publicly-for-1st-time-1.3071641>

Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations

Bipartisan Bill Introduced to Promote Preservation of Native American Languages

Posted: Friday, May 8, 2015 7:01 am

Earlier this week, **U.S. Senators Tom Udall** and **Martin Heinrich** and **U.S. Representatives Ben Ray Luján** and **Steve Pearce** announced they have introduced the Esther Martinez Native American Languages Preservation Act, a bill to provide grants to Native American language educational organizations to preserve disappearing Native languages in Indian Country. The bill reauthorizes the Native American Languages Program until 2020, and includes improvements to expand the program's eligibility to smaller-sized classes and allow for longer grant periods.

The bill reauthorizes legislation that first passed in 2006 with Udall's leadership, named for the Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo master storyteller Esther Martinez. The Esther Martinez Native American Preservation Act amends the Native American Languages Act of 1990 to strengthen Native language education by creating and funding Native language nests, Native language survival schools, and Native American language restoration programs. The program's current authorization expired in 2012, but annual appropriations have continued during the lapse.

"Esther Martinez was one of New Mexico's strongest advocates for preserving Native heritage and language, and I'm proud to introduce this legislation to honor and continue her work. Grants through the Esther Martinez Native American Languages Preservation Act help families and communities keep their languages alive, preserving the deep history and culture behind them," **Udall said**. "Language education is about more than tradition; it fosters pride and an interconnectedness between generations and has been linked to higher academic achievement among Native youth. I'm proud to support the continuation and expansion of these important grants in New Mexico and across the country."

"Preserving Native language is central to cultural identity, and that's what Esther Martinez fought for. Languages like Keres, Tewa, Tiwa, Towa, Zuni, Diné, Eastern Apache and Western Apache, make us a stronger, more culturally rich and historically grounded nation," **Heinrich said**. "Simultaneously, the preservation and instruction of these languages raises high school graduation rates and college enrollment for tribal students. Teaching and preserving these languages should be a central educational priority. This bill helps to achieve that goal."

"Preserving language is essential to ensuring the preservation of the rich history and culture of tribal communities in New Mexico and across the country," **Luján said**. "Without urgent and sustained intervention many Native languages risk extinction in the coming decades. This legislation will support language immersion programs that expand fluency in Native languages and strengthen valuable connections between Native students

and their culture and communities. It will help carry on the proud traditions that Esther Martinez worked so hard to protect and pass down from generation to generation.”

“The preservation of Native American languages is essential in retaining the rich culture and history of the various tribes in New Mexico,” **said Pearce**. “The grant money provided through the Esther Martinez Native American Languages Preservation Act is critical to accomplishing this goal. I am proud to support the reauthorization of this program as it will allow Native languages in New Mexico and across the country to be passed on to future generations.

Based on recommendations from tribes and the administration, the New Mexico members included improvements to the program in this bill to reduce the class size eligibility for the grants and allow longer grant periods of up to five years. The bill reduces the number of students required for eligibility from 10 to five for Native American language nests, which provide childcare and instruction for children up to age seven and their parents. The bill also reduces the class size required for eligibility from 15 to 10 students for Native language survival schools, which aim for their students to achieve Native language fluency, and provide teacher training and development to support successful language learning. The urgent need to protect and preserve Native American languages is clear and applications for grants through the program roughly doubled from fiscal year 2013 to 2014, according to the Department of Health and Human Services.

This bill is cosponsored by U.S. Sens. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), Heidi Heitkamp (D-N.D.), Jon Tester (D-Mont.), Al Franken (D-Minn.), and Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii) and has the bipartisan support of eight cosponsors in House.

Direct Link: http://www.cibolabeacon.com/news/bipartisan-bill-introduced-to-promote-preservation-of-native-american-languages/article_6ab1d9ce-f582-11e4-88c6-dfc7bd9f23ee.html

Native American tribe given ownership of farm in Waverly



Larry Stumme, attorney to the deceased Ella Jean Ray, at left, is shown with her neighbors and land caretakers Rod and Julie Waggett. All are wrapped in quilts gifted to them by the Rosebud Sioux tribe of South Dakota, to whom Ray gifted her land.

May 09, 2015 1:15 pm • By [Mike Anderson](#)

WAVERLY| Phil Little Thunder Sr. pointed up.

“To the sky,” the medicine man said. “To the Star Nation. Where we came from.”

He began to sing. A haunting sound mingled with smoke, wind and birdsong.

Little Thunder was a member of a delegation from the Rosebud Sioux Tribe of Native Americans that drove the eight hours from South Dakota to the verdant swatch of prairie nestled on a farm in Waverly Friday morning.

He sang for the farm’s former owner, Ella Jean Ray.

When the 88-year-old woman passed away this winter, she left all 200 acres of her land to the Rosebud Sioux tribe.

Larry Stumme was Ray’s attorney. He had known her for 30 years.

“She wanted to give back,” Stumme said. “She said ‘We took it from them.’”

With Cherokee in her bloodline, Ray had an enduring interest in Native Americans and was deeply troubled by the way the U.S. government treated them throughout history, Stumme said.

As her health failed, Ray decided she had to act before it was too late. As per her final wishes upon her passing in December, the deed for the land passed to the Tribal Land Enterprise, the Rosebud Sioux’s land management organization.

“She knew they would take care of the land just like she did,” Stumme said. “This land will be in perpetuity not for one family, not for two families, but for a people. And that’s the dream that Jean had and that’s the dream we celebrate today.”

Tribal Land Enterprise manages more than 900,000 acres of land checkered across South Dakota, Minnesota, Nevada, Oklahoma, and now Iowa, according to Adelita Guerue, the group’s chief financial officer.

A few years ago, Guerue said, the U.S. federal government offered to give the Tribal Land Enterprise money so they could begin buying up properties.

The Rosebud Sioux turned the money down.

“Why would we want to buy back our own land?” Guerue said. “That was our sacred land to begin with.”

Guerue said she didn’t know what to think when she first learned that a woman in Iowa was giving her land to the tribe.

“It’s unheard of,” she said.

Guerue, Little Thunder, and others from the tribe made the journey from South Dakota to honor Ray with traditional Rosebud Sioux ceremonies.

“It was beautiful,” Guerue said. “That’s what we do. We honor our own.”

Under tribal law, the Tribal Land Enterprise cannot sell any land it obtains. For the time being, the farm will be leased to Rod and Julie Waggett, Ray’s longtime neighbors who have since become the property’s caretakers.

Guerue said the tribe has yet to decide what to do with the land in the long-term.

“It’s so far from where we are,” Guerue said. “But land is valuable to us no matter what.”

Stumme, the Rosebud Sioux delegation, and a small group of onlookers stood silently as a small fire consumed a box containing Ray’s diaries.

From there they gathered at the prairie where a trunk full of her worldly belongings was to be buried and her ashes scattered in the grass.

“If, at the time of my death,” Ray wrote in her will, “I am still the legal owner of my present farm, it is directed that the residue of the cremation of my remains be scattered, as casually as the dawning of a quiet summer’s day, upon the native prairie of that farm.”

After Little Thunder sang the Four Directions Prayer, the medicine man did just that.

“It was kind of a spectral feeling this morning,” Stumme said. “It was a special underlying happiness ... kind of a once-in-a-lifetime experience. It’s too bad if it is. But then maybe it isn’t.”

Direct Link: http://wcfcourier.com/news/local/native-american-tribe-given-ownership-of-farm-in-waverly/article_9fcd171d-4e25-57fa-9a27-1763e8517201.html

Bury My Heart on the Bend of the João Dias Streamlet in the Indigenous Land of Limão Verde

[Renata Tupinambá](#)

5/9/15

Some years ago the Indian Tenetehar from Maranhão told me about a Bororo leader when someone asked him about those times of the colonization. Touched and speaking in a loud voice he said: “The European, the civilized man, when he arrived here, he stepped hard, he stepped hard not only in the land, but in the soul of our people as well. The rivers got wider, the seawater became saltier, but both were with our people’s tears.” I never forgot those words. I knew it was truth and that within our blood there were still the tears of our ancestors running. I thought of the way that my grandmother’s grandmother was murdered in the end of the XIX century with a bullet against her chest and of her last wish to go back to her ancestral land, her village, the land neither her body nor her spirit could see again in Bahia.

When I visited for the first time the Indigenous Village of Limão Verde in the city of Aquidauana in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul, in Central-West Brazil, I observed a clean water streamlet that crossed the whole community. It crosses several areas and farms until it arrives all polluted in the city of Aquidauana. Those waters that roll a long way to get in the city tell a little bit of the history of each border, in the land in which the spirits are thirsty, stage one part of the Paraguayan War. It reminded me of the book “Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee,” by Dee Brown in which he shows the massacre and the genocide of the indigenous population in North America. A decision of the Supreme Federal Court in March 2015, nullified the Declaratory Administrative Rule of the Indigenous Land of Limão Verde. Terena leaderships asked the SFC to revalidate the Declaratory Administrative Rule so they do not lose their homologated indigenous area. A resistance symbol Limão Verde does not represent today merely a part of the history of the Terena, but all the indigenous lands threatened in Brazil.

The Indigenous Peoples of Brazil are going through an intense rescue process of their ancestral lands. In Ilhéus, Bahia, the Tupinambá from Olivença suffer retaliation from the farmers, they await for the demarcation of their lands and constantly have their leaderships killed in gunmen’s ambushes. In Pau Brasil the Pataxó Hã Hã Hãe people are going through the same conflicts situation over land, even after the assassination in

Brasília in 1997 of the Pataxó Hã Hã Hãe, Galdino Jesus dos Santos, from the Indigenous Land of Caramuru-Catarina Paraguaçu. He was sleeping on a bus stop of a public square when the teenagers Tomás Oliveira de Almeida, Eron Chaves Oliveira, Max Rogério Alves, Antonio Novely Cardoso and Gutemberg Nader Almeida Junio put fire on him.

A great part of the indigenous territory in the country is occupied mainly by farms, hotels or companies, in which the indigenous people were not only victims of expulsion and genocide in the past but also of slavery and exploitation during the whole existence of the Indian Protection Service (IPS). The document that proves that is the Figueiredo Report written in 1967 and found by the historiographer Marcelo Zelic of the Grupo Tortura Nunca Mais of São Paulo (Torture Never Again). This report gathers a series of accusations over human rights violations at the time of the military dictatorship in Brazil from 1964 to 1968. Whole communities suffered from torture, extermination and slavery. Indigenous Commission of Truth have been gathering testimonies among several peoples about this period of violence based on the National Commission of Truth (Comissão Nacional da Verdade) created over the Law 12528/2011 and established in 16th May 2012.

Some lands were demarcated by the government but a lot more are still waiting to be. Land is life, the safety guarantee for future generations and maintenance of the culture of each people. Without land, many indigenous families have to live by roadsides or in places where one cannot have a decent condition of life. Today we have an indigenous population that besides suffering from prejudice and discrimination, present in some regions high child mortality rates and leaderships are killed in conflicts over land with non-Indians. Unfortunately, in Brazil the indigenous lands are going through repossession. That happens when farmers and others take the land supported by misappropriated laws. One of the articulations between agroindustry and rural caucus that are trying to make money in these lands. Besides we have gone through 515 years of colonization, we are still living as we did before, even though many indigenous rights were obtained with the Constitution of 1988. There are more than 300 indigenous nations in Brazil. With the arrival of the Constitution Amendment Proposition 215/2000, known as PEC 215, no more Indigenous Land is assured in Brazil if it gets approved.

This story originally appears at www.radioyande.com, and is a reprint with permission. Translated into English by José Jefferson.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/05/09/bury-my-heart-bend-joao-dias-streamlet-indigenous-land-limao-verde-160291>

Lessons From the Andrés Accords

[Duane Champagne](#)

5/10/15

It is often unusual for Indigenous Peoples to have the opportunity express their views and visions about their needs and futures. There remains considerable ignorance and misunderstanding about what Indigenous Peoples want and are striving for. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) is one place to look. The UNDRIP document is the product of over 30 years of negotiation. Many Non-Government Organizations and indigenous persons and nations contributed to the discussions. And perhaps above all else what emerged from those discussions is the voice and needs of Indigenous Peoples.

UNDRIP is very good—despite the diplomatic language—at identifying the key issues that indigenous people believe they need addressed to secure their futures and social cultural and political well being. To a large extent, UNDRIP leaves the solutions to indigenous rights in the hands of national governments and judicial systems. UNDRIP asks Indigenous Peoples to work within the political and judicial processes of nation states. This is one possible solution if nation states are willing at some level to accept Indigenous Peoples rights to culture, political and land autonomy.

A rare case where Indigenous Peoples in contemporary times have had the opportunity to express their views was in the San Andrés Accords worked out with the Mexican government in 1996. Here the activism of the Zapatistas, at least briefly, gave Indigenous Peoples leverage to express their needs and views. The position of the Zapatistas was also circulated among many of the Indigenous Peoples of Mexico, who were favorable to the agreements made in the San Andrés Accords.

The Accords requested that the Mexican state recognize the diversity of the Indigenous Peoples. The Indigenous Peoples were not a homogeneous ethnic or minority group, but rather spoke many languages and had many distinct cultures and histories. The Indigenous Peoples wanted protection for the natural resources located on their lands. They wanted the right to prohibit resource extraction from externally managed companies, especially when the Indigenous Peoples gained little or no benefit. In terms of indigenous and Mexican state government relations, indigenous people wanted greater participation in the decision-making and distribution of government funding.

The Indigenous Peoples were not rejecting participation in the Mexican state, but saw the national government as a resource for local governments and development. However, the Indigenous Peoples wanted greater voice in the distribution of public funding, so publicly funded projects were informed by their own cultures and local issues. Indigenous Peoples wanted greater political influence, more attention to establishing common cultural ground, and recognition of indigenous local and traditional governments, and more control over future social and economic development plans.

The Mexican state should be a partner in indigenous economic and political futures, and recognize and respect indigenous ways of managing land, justice, and government. Local indigenous control and influence over courts and police were very critical for development of more democratic relations, and toward incorporation of indigenous views of justice and order. Indigenous Peoples did not want to separate from the Mexican

nation and state, but rather asked for assurances that Indigenous Peoples and voices would have access to, participate in, and have effect within Mexican political processes.

Since 1996, however, the Mexican state has not honored the San Andrés Accords. The position of the government was that the government granted rights, and that the indigenous people do not have inherent rights to territory, self-government, and their cultures were uncivilized. Additional troops, paramilitary actions, and legislation put increased power in the hands of the majority groups within Mexican state governments. The Mexican government immediately rejected the views and aspirations of the San Andrés Accord. The Indigenous Peoples of Mexico were and are left with little hope of realizing their visions of cooperative and progressive cultural, political, and economic alliances with the Mexican nation state.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/05/10/lessons-andres-accords-160173>

Native American Cuisine Turns Japanese at This Oklahoma Supper Club

May 13, 2015 / 11:18 am

By [Ryan Freeman](#)

In a rather unassuming home located in a quiet residential neighborhood within Oklahoma City, there's a small group of young men listening to 2 Chain's *Freebase* EP and prepping ingredients for dishes such as “*hiratake* soba, quail egg, kale, duck heart” or “pâté chicken, corn, huitlacoche, sorrel.” They're roasting coffee beans, pickling vegetables, and making ice cream for their supper club known as [Nani](#).

Nani is run out of the home of Colin Stringer, where he and Andon Whitehorn operate as personal chefs, serving dinner four nights a week. Fourteen seats surround a communal table at which diners experience a 14- to 18-course tasting menu built on a foundation of locally sourced and foraged meats and produce, seamlessly interweaving Asian techniques and ingredients with those of local Native Americans. This concept, stemming from Whitehorn's Choctaw Indian heritage, both preserves the history of the native population and modernizes the cuisine. The approach encourages diners to think about where they live, where their food comes from, and the bounties enjoyed there for centuries by native peoples.



The Nani crew

Nani's Japanese elements are a product of the chefs' mutual love for the cuisine, as well as Whitehorn's years of experience as a sushi chef. They were attracted to the simplicity of Japan's dishes, the sophistication of its techniques, and the many core ingredients that lend Japanese cooking its distinctive flavors. "I think about kombu and bonito and Japanese shoyu, and can't imagine cooking *any* kind of cuisine without them," says Stringer, who had no formal experience in Japanese cooking prior to opening Nani.

As Whitehorn describes it, the evolution of Nani's food stems from taking the best aspects of both Japanese and Native American cuisine, and fusing them with ideas like seasonality, sustainability, and shared preservation methods. "Over time, however, we have begun to naturally develop our own voice," Whitehorn notes. "The idea of Nani became less about those two cuisines and more about what they meant in our given surroundings: Oklahoma."



Mackerel with fennel, corn, and tomatoes

A big part of that, Whitehorn says, is building on traditional Native recipes and letting the ingredients speak for themselves. This learning process has encouraged the chefs to reach out to local tribes to learn more about [pre-removal](#) dishes that showcase the sensibilities they want to echo at Nani.

Whitehorn and Stringer found foraging to be not only a method for exploring traditional Oklahoman cuisines, but also as another way to naturally tie in Japanese flavors. Nani's fall and winter dishes utilized persimmon, juniper, sumac, and mushrooms, while this season's dishes will utilize wild alliums, sand plums, yarrow, lavender, beach mustard, and wild dill. These local Oklahoman ingredients often share parallels with those found in Japan, allowing similar applications and approaches. "Okra is eaten in both cultures. Persimmons grow in both Oklahoma and Japan. Yuzu smells remarkably like juniper," says Whitehorn. "The more you look, the more the similarities pop up. This could all be confirmation bias, but maybe that's OK."



The dishes are not dictated by foraged ingredients, but are instead guided by them. "Sometimes, in times of bounty like right now, we will base a dish around foraged things. But usually foraged things just get added into dishes as we make sense of them," says Stringer. "Morel mushroom season just ended and they, to me, are more than enough to star in a dish. It's pretty easy to create a dish around something so naturally perfect as a nutty, cheesy-tasting mushroom. Other times we just want to take a small amount of wild greens or herbs to add a grassy note. Perhaps we'll want to use some wild carrot for a touch of bitterness, or some sorrel for a bit of brightness in a dessert."



Of course, the business model for a “restaurant” that serves a mere 56 diners a week and upwards of 1,000 dishes—all for a \$60 suggested donation per person— isn’t exactly one that sees its creators swimming in earnings. It may very well be a financially untenable project—and that’s totally fine, because it’s not a really a business. Nani is a playground for these young chefs to experiment with new techniques and ingredients. It’s a passion project fueled by donations, discovered through word of mouth, and much more a labor of love than anything else.

“I want the food to speak to people in an emotional way,” says Stringer. “Because let’s face it: This type of work is emotional.”



Nani may be just one non-restaurant, located in one city in the Midwest, but it is representative of a growing culinary movement that finds chefs and diners alike looking outside of the stale, traditional restaurant model, connecting with their community, and experiencing amazing food.

This month, the Nani team will be hitting the road, staging pop ups at Chimera in Tulsa, Barley Swine in Austin, and many others. Chefs Andon and Colin are currently semi-finalists for the Eater Young Gun Awards.

Direct Link: <http://munchies.vice.com/articles/native-american-cuisine-turns-japanese-at-this-oklahoma-supper-club>

Fossil Fuel Extraction Dangers: Native American and Women's Organizations Request UN Help on Sexual Violence

[Honor the Earth](#)

5/12/15

On April 21, 2015, a coalition of Native American and women's organizations filed a submission to the United Nations Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, requesting UN intervention in the epidemic of sexual violence brought on by extreme fossil fuel extraction in the Great Lakes and Great Plains region. This body was convened in New York from April 20 to May 1, 2015, for the Fourteenth Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

The submission documents the connection between extreme extraction and sexual violence against Native women in the Bakken oil fields of western North Dakota and eastern Montana, and the Tar Sands region of Alberta, Canada, where vast "man camps" of temporary labor have become lawless hubs of violence and human trafficking. It also contextualizes this epidemic within the history of colonization, genocide, and systemic violence against Indigenous peoples, which has always disproportionately affected women and girls.

The submission was made by Dr. Dawn Memee Harvard of the Native Women's Association of Canada, also on behalf of Honor the Earth, Brave Heart Society, Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center, One Billion Rising, Indigenous Women's Network, and individuals including Tanaya Winder and Prairie Rose Seminole.

"Violence against our earth and water is perpetrated on a daily basis, against those things absolutely vital to our very existence," said Patina Park, Executive Director of the Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center. "We can't be surprised that people who would rape our land are also raping our people. We must do something to stop this from continuing."

“I have been to the Bakken oil fields and witnessed firsthand the extreme extraction being perpetrated against our earth. I have heard the horrific stories of women who are being trafficked and violated simultaneously. I know our fight is here. We must stand with our Indigenous sisters who are on the front lines of this abuse and demand the end of rape of women's bodies and our earth,” said Eve Ensler, Executive Director of One Billion Rising.

Winona LaDuke, Executive Director of Honor the Earth, said, “We are in a time of extreme extraction, as we grasp desperately for the last remaining deposits of fossil fuels to satisfy our addiction. This means extreme violence against Mother Earth, exploding her bedrock, pumping lethal chemicals into the water, removing entire mountaintops, and destroying our own habitat. This violence impacts Indigenous communities the most, especially women. Violence against the land has always been violence against women.”

The submission requests that the UN Special Rapporteur hold hearings in the cities and indigenous territories of Minnesota and North Dakota to address the epidemic of sexual violence against Native women. In the coming months, the coalition will be working to organize those hearings.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/05/12/fossil-fuel-extraction-dangers-native-american-and-womens-organizations-request-un-help>

Praying in Creek: Rural Indian church keeps faith with its ancestral language

Rural Indian church holds on to ancestral language



Brian Onthehill sings at Concharty United Methodist Church, in rural Okmulgee County, where most of the worship MIKE SIMONS/Tulsa songs are still in the Muscogee (Creek) language. World

Posted: Friday, May 1, 2015 12:00 am | Updated: 10:47 am, Fri May 1, 2015.

By MICHAEL OVERALL World Staff Writer |

OKMULGEE — Two little girls, 7-year-old cousins who could almost pass for identical twins, come running across the grass, their waist-length hair flowing behind them, their shoes muddy from playing in the creek.

“Look what we found,” one of them squeals, holding up a turtle the size of a brick.

Jeremiah Wilson, in denim overalls and a dark T-shirt, leans down, almost face-to-face with the creature.

“Lucv,” he says.

And he repeats the word, emphasizing the pronunciation: “*Loocha*.”

The girls take their turtle and run off to show somebody else, leaving Wilson standing alone in the doorway at Concharty United Methodist Church. Were they paying attention? Will they remember what he said? Someday, when their hair is gray like his, will they bring little ones to the church and teach them the words their ancestors spoke? Or will the Muscogee (Creek) language be forgotten?

“I don’t even know it now,” he says, sighing deeply. “Some words, yes, but not like people used to.”

Wilson has been coming to this church for 66 years, his whole life. As a little boy, he used to get his shoes muddy in the creek, too, a hundred yards downhill from the church’s bell tower. Families would camp here from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon, surrounded by other members of the tribe. Some brought tents. Others slept under the stars. A few had tiny cabins, some of which are still here, lined up in a row with peeling paint and broken windows.

The entire weekend would be spent eating communal meals, building campfires and playing with cousins. And singing.

Remembering

Levi On-The-Hill remembers, too. The old church, when he was too little to see over the pews, was a rickety clapboard building with a wood-burning stove.

“It had its own battle to fight every time big winds came through,” he says, laughing.

The new church — people still call it “the new church” — was built in 1959, when On-The-Hill was 5 years old. It has cinder-block walls, a metal roof and air conditioning, with a tapestry of the Last Supper behind the pulpit and 15 pews — massive compared to the old church.

A church of one kind or another has stood here, at the dead-end of a narrow country road 25 minutes northeast of Okmulgee, since 1904. But the congregation traces itself all the way back to 1832, when the Concharty Indians, part of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, were forced out of Georgia. Most of them were already Christians when they came to Indian Territory, but they clung to elements of their ancient culture, putting biblical lyrics to melodies that their ancestors had sung for countless generations.

Those are the songs that On-The-Hill heard as a little boy, sitting in the pews with muddy shoes after playing in the creek.

“The singing, it was more than you can explain,” he says, alone in the sanctuary after a recent Sunday morning service. “It was just feeling like the whole church was in unity. And it brings tears to my eyes.”

He pauses a moment to wipe them away.

“It brings tears to my eyes just to think that our people now, they won’t ever feel anything like that again.”

Learning

The language started fading in the 1960s. On-The-Hill’s grandparents spoke it fluently, but his parents didn’t. He didn’t.

Preachers began giving their sermons twice, first in Creek, then in English for those who didn’t know the native language. Eventually, only a handful of old-timers could understand it, so the Creek sermons stopped. English hymnals arrived, too.

On-The-Hill sang the new songs, but he wasn’t going to give up the old ones. *Never*. He taught himself the words and listened to the elders sing, Sunday after Sunday, memorizing the cadence, the harmonies, the rhythms.

“I just tried and tried and tried,” he says. “I don’t know if I’ll ever sing as well as they did ... But I sing.”

His son grew up here, too, finding turtles in the creek, running through the grass, listening to the old songs. The congregation was more spirited then, clapping and shouting with lots of “hallelujahs and “amens.” In the ’90s, when Brian Onthehill was a teenager, the preaching still slipped into the Creek language occasionally.

“What am I supposed to get out of this?” he would think to himself. “I don’t know these words.”

He was 13 or 14 when he began, all on his own, to study his father’s Creek dictionary. Then his father enrolled him in language classes in Okmulgee. And later, Brian Onthehill took advanced classes at the University of Oklahoma.

By the time he graduated, he could carry on simple conversations with the elders. And Onthehill, on his own initiative, organized classes on Wednesday nights for other members of the church.

“Pretty soon,” he says, “more and more people were able to read the language. More and more people started to sing.”

The sermons are still English, and a few of the hymns, too. But most of the worship songs are Creek again, sung a cappella, as always. In recent years, Concharty United Methodist has recorded two CDs, sending copies to other Indian churches to help them learn the old songs. Or, more precisely, to relearn them.

“The younger generation wants this,” says Brian Onthehill, now in his 30s. “We want to bring back the old ways.”

Listening

The church bell rings at 11 o'clock Sunday morning and people come streaming out from the fellowship hall, where they've been cooking lunch. Pots get covered with foil and set aside until after the service.

The pews will fill up eventually, with nearly 40 worshipers here by the time the sermon starts. But it takes a while to round up all the kids, playing down by the creek. So the crowd looks sparse as the older On-The-Hill stands up to start the first song.

His 2-year-old granddaughter, wearing a bright pink sweater with a matching bow in her hair, stands next to him. He bows his head. She looks up. He sings. She listens.

Her generation will decide if the language lives or dies.

Direct Link: http://www.tulsaworld.com/news/religion/praying-in-creek-rural-indian-church-keeps-faith-with-its/article_d840f168-6b58-5310-a884-0606f7738748.html

Amazonian Dredging Halted Until Indigenous Are Consulted

[Barbara Fraser](#)

5/14/15

A Peruvian court has ruled that plans to dredge parts of the Amazon and its major tributaries must be suspended until indigenous communities along the rivers are consulted.

The ruling by the Superior Court of Loreto, in northeastern Peru, could set a precedent in the country, according to Juan Carlos Ruiz, a lawyer at the non-profit Legal Defense Institute (*Instituto de Defensa Legal*, IDL).

“This is the first case involving an (infrastructure) megaproject that has been won by an indigenous organization,” said Ruiz, who filed the case on behalf of Acodecospat, an association of Kukama communities in the lower Marañón River valley.

For the Kukama Kukamiria in the lower Marañón River valley, the river is the home of the boa that gave birth to the first of their people. It is also the source of water for cooking, washing, drinking and bathing, as well as the main transit route through a region with almost no roads.

And spirits—including family members who drowned and whose bodies were never recovered—live in its depths.

The proposed waterway or “hydrovia” is part of a South American plan to improve infrastructure connecting the region’s countries. It would involve dredging what officials call “bad spots”—shallow places and snags of submerged tree trunks—along the Amazon River and three Peruvian tributaries, the Marañón, Huallaga and Ucayali River.

But local fishermen say those are “good spots”—places where fish gather and river spirits rest.

The \$64 million project also calls for signals marking the channel a system to transmit information about water levels. The goal is to make the rivers navigable year-round to the port cities of Yurimaguas and Pucallpa, where freight from Brazil can connect with highways to the coast.

The Peruvian government had called for bids on the project, but suspended the process in February, when only one of the eight companies that had expressed interest actually presented a bid.

Some observers said the reluctance may have been due to a lower court ruling in Acodecospat’s favor and the appeal that was pending at the time before the higher court.

At a public hearing in February in Nauta, a port town on the Marañón River, officials from the Ministry of Transportation and Communications told community leaders that the government would not go ahead with the project until a consultation was held.

A law requiring prior consultation of indigenous communities when a development project or government plan would affect their communal rights took effect in 2011.

In arguing the case, Ruiz said indigenous organizations should be consulted on both the terms of reference for the project and on the environmental impact study.

The superior court ruling, however, leaves some unanswered questions about the consultation process. In its decision, the court said it lacked the authority to dictate when the consultation should occur.

While the appeal was under way, officials from the Ministry of Transportation and Communications and ProInversion, the government's investment promotion agency, met with leaders of indigenous organizations from the four affected watersheds to discuss the consultation process.

The consultation plan will be announced formally on May 19, according to the government news agency, and the consultation is to be completed by August.

At the public hearing in February, Kukama leaders told government officials that they were worried about the impact of dredging on fish and riverside fields where they grow corn, rice and bananas.

They also expressed concern about the safety of river travel, as the canoes generally used by local families can be swamped by the wake of large vessels.

Several speakers mentioned the impact on the spirits that live in the river, a topic that has generally gone unnoticed in discussions of the waterway.

One potential problem with the planned dredging is that little is known about sediment flows in the targeted rivers, according to Jorge Abad, a Peruvian civil engineer at the University of Pittsburgh's Center for Research and Education of the Amazonian Rainforest.

Abad is leading the first effort to map the sediment flows in the four rivers that would be affected by the dredging. Without basic data, he said, it is impossible to predict potential environmental impacts of the project.

"First you have to understand the river," he said, "and I don't think we're at the point of understanding our rivers yet."

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/05/14/amazonian-dredging-halted-until-indigenous-are-consulted-160359>